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*An*  
AMBASSADOR

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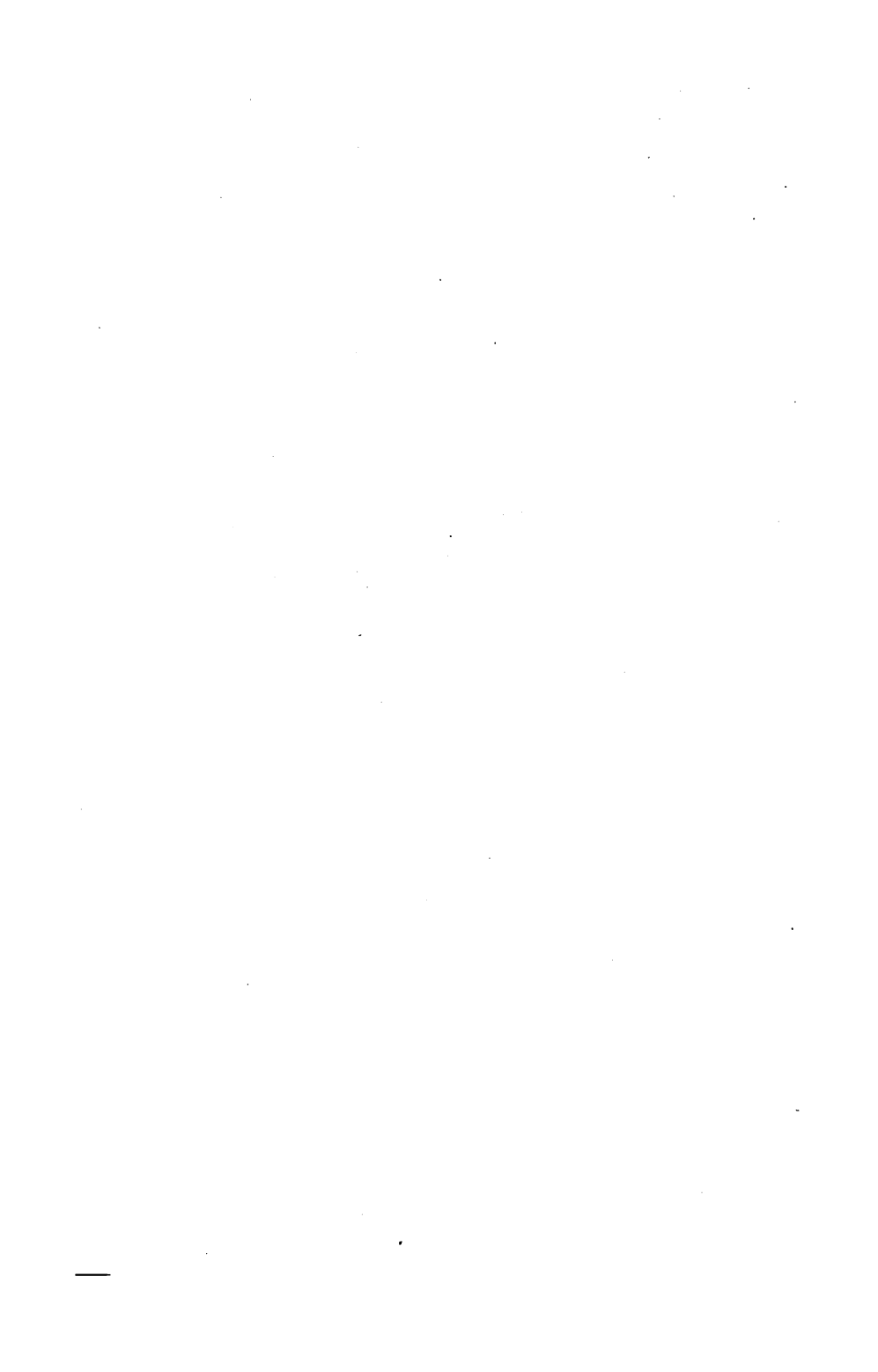
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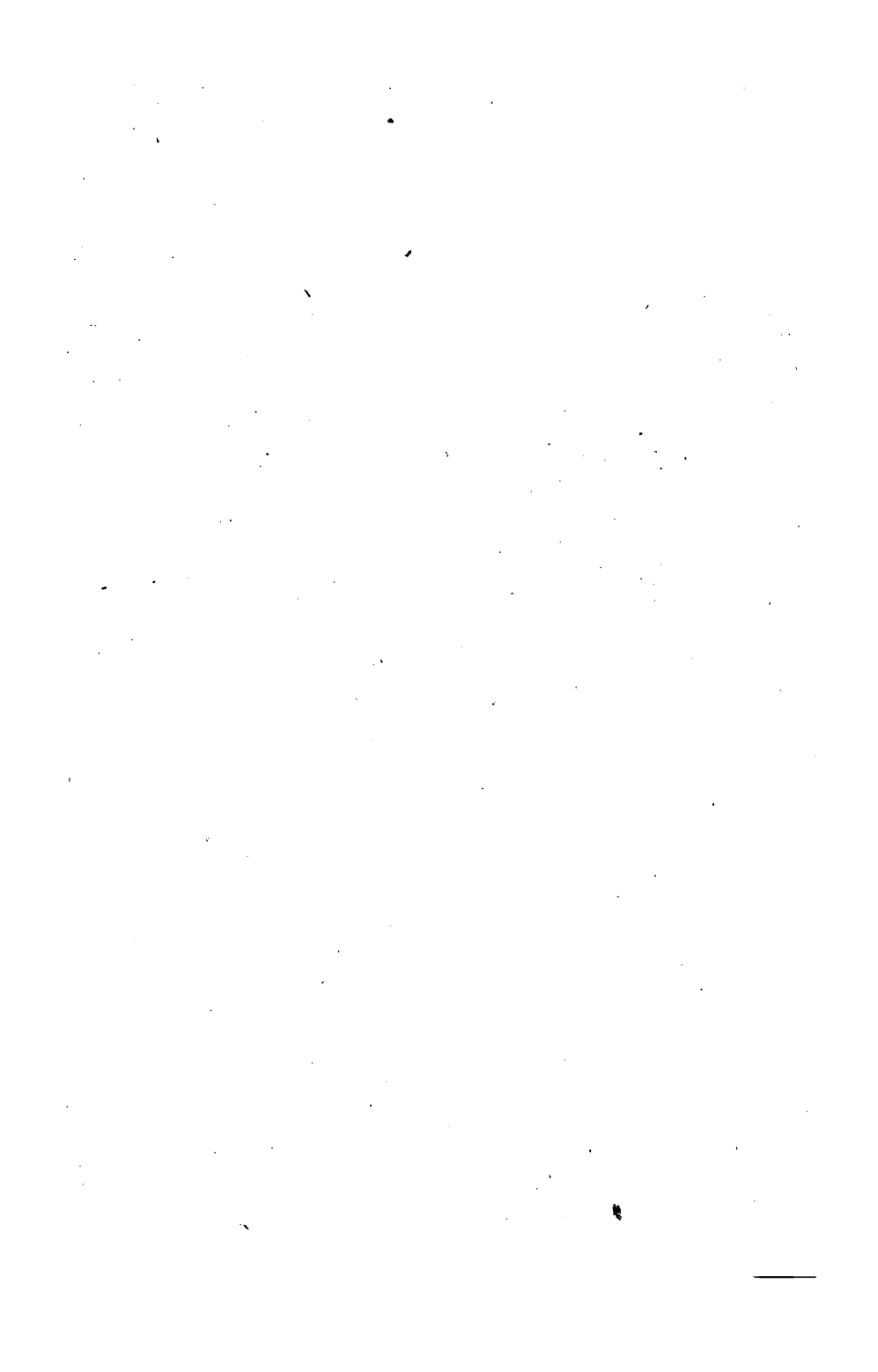


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# AN AMBASSADOR

*CITY TEMPLE SERMONS*

BY

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON, D. LITT.

Author of "The Eternal Christ," etc.



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To

**ALBERT DAWSON**

**Editor of the Christian Commonwealth,**

**A dear Friend and Fellow-worker,**

**with Gratitude, Appreciation, and**

**Sincere Brotherly Regard**



## PRELUDE

**T**HE following sermons were most of them preached in the City Temple, London, during the month of July, 1916, and are here gathered into a volume, in answer to many requests, from the pages of *The Christian Commonwealth*, of London, in which a sermon by the author appears each week. The preacher went as an Ambassador of Goodwill from the great Republic to the great Empire, as a Messenger of Brotherly Love from the Churches of America to the Churches of England; and he was received with a courtesy, a hospitality, and a spirit of fellowship never to be forgotten. As long as he lives he will carry in his heart the memory of those vast assemblies that greeted him in the Temple, and the faces of the dear friends who gave him their hearts to keep.

England in war-time, subdued, suffering, heroic; London a hospital and a hive of industry; a nation cemented by one spirit of service and sacrifice, united on one sense of duty and of destiny; all ranks vowed to one motto, "Every man do his bit—and stick it"; everywhere the hauntings of history, everywhere the thrill and throb of a New History in the making—such was the scene in

which these sermons have their setting. If they deal with different themes, they have a unity of spirit, as they have one passion and one purpose: to make vivid the truth as it is in Jesus, deeper than all dogmas, larger than all creeds, and equal to every emergency, every calamity, every problem, whether of peace or of war.

Amid the welter of world-war, with its measureless tragedy and woe, one fact rises like a pulse of fire in a dark sky—that the Eternal Christ is the solitary hope of our poor humanity, in England, in America, everywhere. He is all that we have left, and He is all that we need; His Life our Way, His Truth our Light, His Spirit our Bond of Unity, His Fellowship our Sanctuary of Cleansing for the worship of God and the service of Man. If these sermons make the Living Christ more real to those who walk a shadowy way, and thereby induce a sweeter sense of security amidst the unrealities of time, they will have done what they were sincerely meant to do.

J. F. N.

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA.

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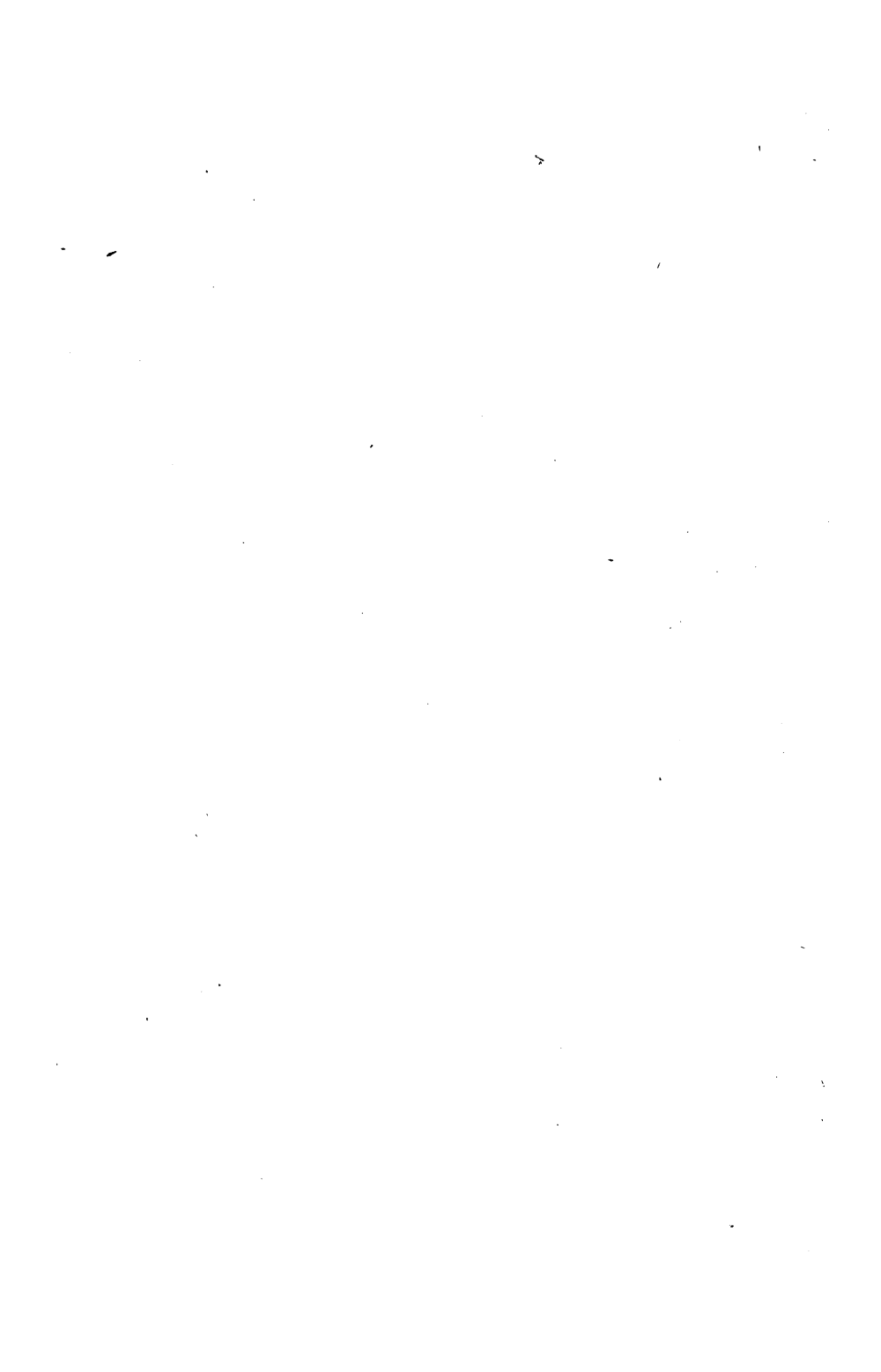


**CITY TEMPLE SERMONS**

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**AN AMBASSADOR**





**CITY TEMPLE SERMONS**

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**AN AMBASSADOR**

Almighty God, our Father, in whom there is no darkness and no distance, from whom neither time nor space, nor life nor death can separate us, reverently we seek Thee in this place of prayer, that we may learn to find Thee everywhere. Vouchsafe Thy mercy, Lord, upon this worshipping company; grant to the lonely Thine ineffable fellowship, to the wounded of heart Thy healing grace, and to the sinful Thy cleansing forgiveness, that we may offer our prayer in sweetness and sanctity. Move Thou among us by Thine awful yet gracious presence, and remove that impalpable barrier that divides soul from soul, that we may be drawn together in one spirit, in one faith, in one solemn and high aspiration to know Thy truth and will.

O Thou beseeching God, our prayers are in time, brief, broken, and imperfect, shaped by lips that soon must turn to dust; but our desires are in eternity, our needs are immortal, our longings are limitless. Satisfy us with Thy mercy; speak to our hearts in that whisper we so love to hear amid the discords of the world—Thy voice of gentle stillness which renews our faith and brings new strength and hope to those who listen. Quiet our minds that we may learn that truth which no mortal words may utter, even the truth that sets us free from the tyranny of time, from the shadow of fear, and from the burden of sorrow that lies so heavy upon us in these strange and troubled times.

Comfort Thou, comfort Thou Thy people; lift up our hearts, fortify our faith, and draw us very near to Thyself, that we may be sanctified in our sorrow and exalted in our sacrifice. Teach us, Lord, to make Thy will our bread, our milk, our law by day and our light by night—giving all that we have and are and hope to be into the keeping of One greater and wiser than ourselves, that we may find peace. Have mercy upon us in our need, and help us to be patient, steadfast, faithful, following the Hand that leads us in the night, though we cannot see the Face till the morning come and the shadows flee away.

Make us ambassadors of Thy love, messengers of Thy mercy, priests of Thy pity, prophets of Thy redeeming and sustaining grace; that the Eternal Christ may be a real presence and His gospel may grow and be glorified among us. Teach us how to tell Thy truth in thoughts that breathe and words that glow; teach us how to live Thy truth. Lord, for Thy Church we pray of every name, of every communion, that it may show forth the truth as it is in Jesus with the insight of faith, the emphasis of experience, and the eloquence of love. Send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead us in the way of the Blessed Life and the Road of the Loving Heart. Together we confess our sin, together we seek Thy mercy, and together we offer our prayer in the name and in the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

# I

## 'AN AMBASSADOR

"Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: be ye reconciled to God."—*II Corinthians 5:20.*

**A**S a prelude to the sermon, let me say how glad I am, and how grateful, to be in England, in London, and in the City Temple. Nor do I feel in any wise like a stranger here, least of all in this pulpit, whose influence I have felt and whose echoes I have heard as far back as I can remember. How could I be an alien in this company of kinsmen in the dear Motherland of all my forefathers? Nor should any one be a stranger anywhere who comes as an Ambassador of Goodwill in behalf of a fraternity of peoples, a deeper friendship of faiths, and a closer fellowship of men and nations. Such is the spirit and purpose of my brief mission in this historic Temple, and it has no other meaning save to bring the greetings and blessings of a host of your fellow workers beyond the sea.

Thirty-six years ago—Sunday evening, July 4, 1880—Phillips Brooks preached in Westminster Abbey. It was a memorable scene, and the sermon was worthy of the cathedral-like soul of the

preacher, whose character was an altar and whose faith was as a lamp of God lighting up the teaching of His words. The sermon had an epilogue in token of the day, in which the preacher asked his audience to offer a prayer of blessing on our great Republic—on its emancipation from slavery, its unconstrained religious life, its passion for education, its jealous care for the rights of the poor, its countless quiet homes, its wide gates open to the East and the West, its strange mingling of races, out of which a new race is being formed, its vast enterprise, and its illimitable hopefulness. Then followed these words: "Because you are Englishmen and I am an American, also because here, under this high and hospitable roof of God, we are all more than Englishmen and more than Americans, because we are all men, children of God, waiting for the full coming of our Father's kingdom, I ask you for that prayer."

Remembering that scene, and standing in the cathedral of the Free Churches of England, I fain would offer for England in her hour of trial such a prayer as Phillips Brooks asked the men of the Motherland to offer for our Republic. It must be a prayer of praise for England and her rough island glory, for her grey, heroic history, for her grand tradition of liberty and of law; a prayer of solemn thanksgiving that England, at infinite cost of blood and sorrow and treasure, stood firm for liberty, justice, and mercy, keeping the faith of

civilisation in an hour of tragedy and of destiny; a prayer of petition that her arm may be strong to do the will of the Eternal, her State an organ of divine equity and of human brotherhood; yea, a prayer for the mercy of God on countless broken homes, and His spirit of consolation on myriad human hearts wounded by the deep stab of war.

By the same token, if we are to keep the light of civilisation aglow upon the earth, much less make its influence grow and prevail, there must be the closest sympathy and understanding between the two great nations having one language, one tradition, one religion, and one supreme interest and ideal. Next to the tragedy of world-war now proceeding, if not the last and worst calamity that could befall humanity, would be an estrangement between England and the American Republic. Because this is so, every visitor from one land to the other ought to be one more tie, however tiny and frail, binding into more enduring union those whom God has joined together, the more so at a time when so many sinister influences are busy in behalf of bitterness and division. Hence my brief ministry here in the name of Him who is the sovereign citizen of the world, the solitary hope of mankind, the kinsman of all races and the saviour of each soul, the Leader and Redeemer "in whom all things hold together." And therefore my text, in which the greatest diplomat of

his day speaks to all the days till days and works shall end.

Judged by the ideals of the world, the life of St. Paul was a failure and a foolishness, a thing to pity rather than to admire. He gave up wealth, power, and the quiet pursuits of a scholar to become a wandering teacher of a despised sect. And yet, judged by its own ideals, that life was a glory and a joy, despite its hardship. A haunting voice made him a homeless follower of the homeless Christ, a pilgrim having no continuing city upon earth. Hither and thither, far and near, pitching his nightly tent in new cities and new lands, he went to and fro over the Roman Empire, an ambassador of a kingdom not of this world. No opposition, no handicap, no hazard could stop that magnificent and ceaseless evangel which gave a new date to the history of faith.

Now, an ambassador is more than a herald. He has more authority, more responsibility, and his mission is freighted with higher import. No ambassador goes on his own behalf, but as the representative and spokesman of another, whose commission he carries and whose cause he pleads. By as much as he forgets himself and identifies his life with the spirit and purpose of his chief, by so much does he the better fulfil his mission. Albeit, he must make use of every resource of strategy, and every art of persuasion, in order to accomplish that whereunto he was sent. Courage

and clear-seeing are needed, but not less so tact, skill, sagacity, and a loyalty that does not waver. No word could better describe the noble and indefatigable ministry of St. Paul, who brought every device of worldly wisdom to the service of the Eternal Gospel of the Love of God in Christ. Never was industry more tireless. Never was loyalty more unwavering. Never was courage more unflinching.

St. Paul was an ambassador of a Person; not of an ideal, not of an abstract principle, but of the Eternal Christ made manifest in the Man Jesus. For him the ultimate reality, the master light of all his seeing, the secret of his unwearying inspiration and industry was the vision of the Fatherhood of God revealed in the Sonship of Christ—the love of God redeeming the race and reconciling the discords of the world into one sovereign harmony at last. How much this means may be seen if we let some of the thinkers of recent time translate the text after their manner, each in his own tongue. Spencer, for example, would say that we are ambassadors of “an infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed,” and the rest of the text would be untranslatable in his dialect. Carlyle would make us messengers of a Conflux of Eternities, a Vortex of Immensities; but none of us would have the heart to go on such a mission. Bergson would send us forth to preach the gospel of a Vital Urge, a mysterious Life Force



fumbling its way through time, making many mistakes, uncertain of its purpose and end. Arnold would make us apostles of "a Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," or else of a stream of tendency flowing somewhither. How thin and cold, how pale and vague such phantoms are alongside the vision of St. Paul, so radiant, so revealing, so rich in its redeeming warmth and power!

St. Paul did not deal in phantoms; he was not an ambassador for abstractions. He knew whom he believed, and in the light of that fellowship his mind travelled upward above the shadows of time and the dread tribunals of fear into the liberty of Christ, finding its richest possessions, its securest outlook, its clearest interpretation of life and death, of time and eternity, of spiritual mystery and mortal tragedy in the heart of God. Everything else was put aside. The metaphysics that could not live in that presence were carried out for burial. That was the testing-place for all ideas, the trysting-place for all souls. For St. Paul the life of Jesus was an unveiling of that in God which most concerns humanity—His thought, His character, His will, His divine beauty, and His eternal purpose. Whatever else might be obscure to him in the profundities of the Divine nature, this was clear—that the love of God was revealed in Jesus. That was all that he asked to know, and that was enough for life and death. He did not argue his

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way up to the feet of God. He did not try to reason his way into His heart. He beheld the glory of the love of God in the face of Christ, and in that light lived his heroic and dedicated life.

That which the mind receives,  
By proof, is small;  
That which the soul perceives  
Is proof of all.

Furthermore, it is not the business of an ambassador to defend his chief, much less to apologise for him, but to deliver his message. Therefore St. Paul resolved to know nothing save Christ and Him crucified—by which he meant the highest truth of heaven made known in the blackest tragedy of earth—and he was not ashamed of the noble narrowness of that gospel. If only the Church had followed his wise example! Alas, the age-long tragedy of the Church lies in that it has not been content to proclaim the love of God in Christ, but has turned aside to defend Jesus, to explain Him, to argue about Him. Early in its history the emphasis was changed from the gospel itself to the evidence for its truth, from the message to the Messenger. Ages of debate followed. The Nicene Creed was not designed to include all who loved Jesus, but to exclude many who thought about Him in a particular way. The Athanasian hymn made salvation depend on acuteness in metaphysics, forgetting that heaven is a tiny village if it is inhabited only by those who can comprehend the

incomprehensible. Unfortunately, that shifted emphasis has never been restored, and to-day the Church is still too much concerned to define or defend Jesus rather than to deliver His message. For that reason she herself is still torn into sects and parties, whereas, in the words of Phillips Brooks, she ought to be a "universal solvent, lying back of all differences and composing them."

As a true ambassador, St. Paul did not try to do everything, but one thing and one only. Instead of coming religiously to every point, he came at once and always to the point of religion in its profoundest motive and manifestation. Truly catholic in his insight and sympathy, he felt the pathos of the groping quest of man for God, as witness his words on Mars' Hill, in which he spoke of the myriad gods of Athens and the altar to the Unknown, and recognised the noble, aspiring faith of ancient Greece. For that very reason—because pity lies at the root of all true evangelism—he was the more eager to lead men to his vision of God in Christ as the fulfilment of all their gropings, the answer to all their aspirations, and the goal of all their seekings. His seeming narrowness was the result of his passionate sympathy, the definiteness of his mission, and the breadth of his outlook. Amidst gods many, he proclaimed One who can tell us—better still, show us—what we most want to know about God, where He is, what He is, and the wonder of His love. And

to the spread of this message he gave his whole power, doing one thing and one only with utter abandon of consecration. He would not sit still. Now here, now there, as some call of counsel or opportunity offered, he went upon his errand, and no stranger upon the road left him without learning his business. Intrepid and daring, he was as unconquerable as he was untiring.

Save "in the spirit," the great Apostle did not know Jesus, and the credentials of his ambassadorship were often called in question by those who opposed the advance of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-religion. And always, when this challenge was made, he went back, not to the laying on of hands, but to that Heavenly Vision on the way to Damascus for the authentic credentials of his ministry. He was the father of such as hold, not to the fiction of apostolic succession, but to the reality of a succession of apostolic souls—men whose hearts God has touched with light and fire and beauty. And therein he was true to all the realities and sanctities of the life of the spirit. For, just as the poet-laureates of England are poets, not by edict of the State, but by grace of the angels of ancestry and the divine right of genius, so teachers of faith have authority and validity not by virtue of rank or office, but by the depth and clearness of their vision of God. By its very nature, authority in matters of faith, so far as it is entrusted to men, is not official or tra-

ditional, but spiritual and persuasive. Every Christlike soul is an ambassador for Christ, and his fellowship with the living Christ constitutes a commission authentic from the hand of the Master Himself, more true and more sacred than can be conferred by all the prelates on earth.

That is to say, the authority and witness of the ambassadorship of St. Paul, that which made his apostolate at once authentic and fruitful, was his mystical experience of the Living Christ. Now, mysticism, as sweet Florence Nightingale said, is only a big word for the deep truth that the kingdom of heaven is within—"the life of God in the soul of man"; and Christian mysticism differs from other kinds not in quality, not in the way it follows, still less in its method, but in its atmosphere and fellowship. It is a journey to Emmaus, hallowed by the presence of One who is Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and therefore simpler and sweeter, if not swifter and more satisfying, than other pilgrimages to the same goal. None the less, the way of the soul is the same in every age, in every land, and those who walk therein arrive, albeit less easily and happily than those who follow the Living Christ. Mysticism, so far from being a mere aspect of religion, is the heart of it, without which the hands of religion, which do the work, and the mind of religion, which thinks and studies, fall dead and powerless. It is the mystics in every age who have

done most to keep the heart of faith alive, to renew the Church in eras of deadness and despair, and to restore a healthy tolerance and a happy liberty of faith. Without them the tradition of faith would be a mere legend, though every Church could boast an unbroken line of laying on of hands.

Here is the fountain of religious fellowship, the secret of unity, and the bond of peace among those who love Christ and seek to follow in His way. Wesley learned this in his later years; learned to "think and let think," as he wrote to the Bishop of Lincoln, and was wont to say, "If thy heart is as my heart, give me your hand." Those who have the mind of Christ find His Church everywhere, in Westminster Abbey, but also in the City Temple; in the cathedral at Moscow, but equally in the chapel of Martineau; in St. Peter's at Rome, but not less so in the little white meeting-house in which Whittier and Woolman sat in silence awaiting the promptings of the Spirit. They are at home wherever men lift hearts in prayer, knowing that, however faiths may differ, faith is one in its vision and victory, even as the human heart is one in its loneliness and longing.

Men and brethren, the time for toleration is past! Think of tolerating the Methodists, with their gospel of free grace and their pentecostal fire, or Channing, with his deep heart of piety! Think of tolerating Emerson, whose mind was as a city of God set upon a hill! How could one

tolerate Mozoomdar or Tagore? No, what we want is not mere toleration, but insight, understanding, appreciation, fellowship, co-operation! Must we all think alike about Jesus in order to love and follow Him together? No, surely no. It was not so in the early Church. Even in the apostolic band there were differences of training, of temperament, of insight and outlook, as there will be in any company of His followers to-day. Our heads are as different on the inside as on the outside, but there is room in His large and luminous fellowship for all the seekers and finders of God. Not unity of thought about Him, but unity of devotion to Him—yea, unity of spirit in Him—should be our ideal and aspiration; not uniformity, but unity in behalf of variety—as in a flower-garden there is one soil, one soft air, one sparkling dew, and every kind of colour and fragrance. No one wishes to make Christianity “a mush of concessions,” but in this day of tragedy we ought to hear the call for a heroic, generous, comprehensive, Christly Church, and pass from “an indolent perception to an operative persuasion,” as Bishop Berkeley put it long ago.

If St. Paul was a mystic—a master mystic of creative insight and experience—he was also a sagacious diplomat in the things of the Spirit. By far the greatest idealist of his age, he yet knew the religious value of worldly wisdom; knew how to be all things to all men, if by any chance he

might win some to the knowledge and love of Christ. In his address on Mars' Hill, with exquisite suavity he recognised what was true and aspiring in the old Greek faith, seeking to disarm his hearers of criticism that he might the better lead them to a richer truth. Again and again, with appealing eloquence, he makes plea for the unity of the Church, beseeching his fellow-workers to hold in abeyance everything but the essentials of faith and life, and not to leave the religion of Christ to the mercy of little thoughts and little things. Here his spiritual statesmanship is a lesson for us. This is the day of Christ if we will hear His voice and drop our petty concerns and follow where He leads without fear and without faltering.

There should be no need to say that for St. Paul the final apologetic of Christian faith was not an argument, but a heroic life in which the truth as it is in Jesus is authenticated in Godlike character and Christlike service. His supreme and sacramental ambition was so to put on Christ, so to reproduce His life, His spirit, His very aspect, that he could say, "For me to live is Christ"—as if the Master lived in his stead. To bear about in his very body the marks of the Lord Jesus, to fill up what was lacking in his suffering, to live an atoning life in the fellowship and by the power of the Living Christ, the while he pleaded with men to be reconciled to God—such was the spirit and



purpose and passion of the greatest preacher our faith has known. Here again his message is for us, and it was never more needed than to-day. Let the truth of the Fatherhood of God as revealed in the life of Jesus be enthroned in our thought and life and faith, and there will be such a renewal of Christianity as shall heal our social ills, redeem civilisation from brutality, and reshape the fashion of things to be!

What a gospel for our strange and troubled age—a truth so unfathomable that we are all one in our littleness, one in our need, one in our hope! How glorious to preach it amid the war of nations, the clash of classes, and the misunderstanding of sects! There remains but one hope for our humanity, living in a world blood-drenched and shaken by the thunder of great guns and the crash of falling cities—the growth in the hearts of men of the spirit and life of Jesus. The way to bring man and God together is in Christ. The way to reconcile men with men is in Christ. And the highest wisdom for each of us is to crown Him Lord of all in our mind and heart and life.

Here, is the warlike trumpet—  
There, life set free from sin:  
When to the last Great Supper  
The faithful shall come in.

## **THE VISION OF GOD**

Infinite Father, to trust whom is liberty of soul, to love whom is salvation, to know whom is life everlasting, we worship Thee for the wonder and glory of life, and for its terror also; because we have learned that beneath its hurt and heart-ache there is a wise love that never fails, never forgets, never forsakes. Earnestly we would seek Thee in the peace of this Sabbath evening, beseeching Thee to be the spirit of our prayer, the leader of our thoughts, and the consolation of our hearts.

We thank Thee for a cloud of witnesses bearing testimony to Thy truth; that company of winged minds through whom Thy revelation has come to us, and who, by their longer flight, lift us to larger outlooks and clearer visions. But most of all we thank Thee for Him who is the Prince of prophets, the King of saints, the Saviour of sinners; the light-bringer and way-shower of humanity, whose life is the sovereign beauty of our mortal world, and whose words tell us the truth about life and death—and the beyond. Oh, we would worship Thee in His spirit, in His faith, in His name, in the beauty of holiness and the fellowship of love.

Open our minds, we humbly pray Thee; purify our hearts; grant us eyes to see Thy truth wherever it is unveiled, and ears to hear all voices that speak to us concerning Thy will and way for us. Admit us, O Lord, if we be worthy, into the communion of vision, that we may be sure of Thy truth—seeing it clearly and with honest hearts—sure of the moral order of the world, and surer of the life eternal which flashes in the dreams of great and pure minds. Forgive our sins, heal our sorrows, and so cleanse our prayer that it may lead us in that noble and faithful service of our fellow souls wherein lieth our nearest duty and our truest joy.

Be Thou our Teacher, as Thou art our Father and Friend, deepening within us the confidence that some day, if not now, then in Thine own good time; somewhere—if not here, then out yonder in the city on the hill—we shall see what here is dim, and understand what here so sorely perplexes us. Behold! we know not now; we can but wait and pray. Bless us, Lord, while we wait in Thy house, and may it be for us a place of vision and a gate of heaven. May the days of this life work in us a quiet patience, a tender wisdom, a large and sweet charity, a victorious faith, and an unconquerable hope; and when the path dips down into the Valley of Shadow, be Thou our companion where no human friend can go, Thy rod and Thy staff our stay. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

## II

### THE VISION OF GOD

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."—*Isaiah* 6:1.

**N**EARLY always in the life of a great man there is one day, sometimes a single luminous hour, which gives the key to his whole career. If one would know the life of Luther, one must hear him singing on the Santa Scala, "The just shall live by faith." The promise and prophecy of his whole after-life were in that scene of awakening to the liberty of the soul in the freedom of faith. If one would know the spirit of Epictetus, one need only hear him asking himself the question, "Who made thee a slave—Cæsar or thyself?" There was the beginning of that heroic struggle for spiritual freedom in the midst of physical infirmity and social bondage, whereof we have such glorious record in his writings.

When time and strength permit, it means much to study the life of a great man in detail, to read all his books, to weigh and estimate his acts in the light of his age, following the stream of his thought from the sunny uplands of youth through

the deepening years until it empties into his tomb. To study one man in that manner, as it has been my joy to study Lincoln, is to know much about all men, something of the meaning of life and the majesty of noble human living. But if time does not make room for that joy, a single shining hour, as has been said, will reveal the spirit of a life, its motive and its consecration, as Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address distilled into a few great and simple words the faith, the vision, and the passion of his life. Three chapters from "Sartor Resartus" will show us Carlyle in his critical period, struggling for his faith, fighting "the foul mud-gods" of his age, as the "In Memoriam" reveals the prophetic genius of Tennyson in its glory—for it will never be other than a marvel that in a poem written, for the most part, before 1843, he forefelt and foresaw the intellectual difficulties of the generation following. In the same way, the life of Isaiah found focus in an hour of vision in which he found his mission as a man, and his consecration and message as a prophet. Then was kindled what Burns called "rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire," and it was the light of God in a dark and troubled time.

Consider when this vision visited Isaiah. A time of crisis is not only shattering and unsettling; it is also creative and revealing, bringing to light new powers, new capacities, uncovering hitherto-unguessed resources, and developing new leaders.

\* Hours of destiny are also hours of discovery, and as the old order passes new leaders appear, as in France Joan of Arc came with her visions and voices in answer to a national need, an angel of victory in an hour of despair. Always it is so. In 1843 Margaret Fuller made an extended tour of our Union, north, south, east, west, and paused for a rest in Chicago. Sitting by an open window overlooking Lake Michigan by moonlight, she wrote to a friend, likening the unstable and agitated condition of public opinion to the restless, formless, riderless waves of that inland sea. The great need of the nation, as she felt it, was for a man to match the hour, to command and control the events then portending. She wrote: "When will this country have such a man? It is what she needs; no thin idealist, no coarse realist, but a man whose eye reads the heavens, while his feet step firmly on the ground, and his hands are strong and dexterous for the use of human implements." So she mused in the moonlight, not knowing that a few miles away the man her prophetic pen called for was preparing, all unconsciously, for the hour and the mission then impending. It was Lincoln—tall, angular, homely, eloquent—whose heart was true, whose mind was clear, and whose moral insight, while not a blinding vision, was as straight as a line of light. When the fatal hour came the man stood forth to meet it, measuring up to its opportunities and its over-

whelming obligations, albeit unknown, save by a few, until he was revealed in the apocalypse of death. No more does England know the full measure of the men appointed to lead her in her hour of crisis; but time will show them in true perspective, as the mountains ask for the clearer light of distance to reveal their greatness. Times of public peril call into action many a brave and noble spirit which would otherwise be unknown, exhibit no example to the living, and bequeath no name to future ages.

Times of tragedy—times of torpor, even—by their very darkness evoke powers of insight, and liberate new forces of redemption, as the age which gave to the State a Burke also gave to the Church a Wesley. Always the masters of the spiritual life, whose names give new dates to the history of faith, have come in periods when the earth seemed swept bare of every footprint of divinity. So Savonarola came in Florence, and Francis in the Galilee of Italy, and Woolman in an age of apathy and slavery in the New World. And thus, amid the uncertainty and forebodings of the year in which King Uzziah died, it was given Isaiah to behold the King of kings who never dies, whose throne, high and lifted up, cannot be shaken, and whose awful holiness is the hope of humanity. Divine disclosures come, it would seem, in answer to the deep need of nations, unveiling the eternal order when the human order is unstable, and light-

ing the Lamp of God in the dark night of time.

Remember, too, where Isaiah was when the vision of the majesty and holiness of God was vouchsafed to him for the cleansing and comfort of his people. He was in the Temple; as we should say, in the church; in the institution of religion. God is present everywhere, but men must learn to find Him in one place before they can find Him in all places—hence the high, ineffable ministry of the temple in the life of man. By a beautiful law of association certain places suggest, if they do not evoke, certain trains of thought and aspiration; and those trains of thought, in turn, hallow the place of their birth—as so often in the Bible a place of prayer or solemn dream became an altar, and finally a shrine. Just before sailing from my native land I visited the slowly rising cathedral of St. John the Divine which is to crown the Morningside Heights of New York City, the temple about which Lane Allen wove his lovely story, "A Cathedral Singer": a story to break the heart—and mend it. Slowly rising on a rock, it stands for order in the streets, for order in the land, for order in the secret places of the soul; and the question came home to me whether in the rush and scramble of American life we have room for a cathedral. If so, the tragedy which that story tells will be less frequent, and the help which that mother sought in her sorrow will be nearer to



heart. If not, our democracy is doomed to end in defeat and chaos.

How impressively, how eloquently has the ministry of places in the life of the Spirit been taught me since landing in England! Surely, in this city of ancient temples, amid shrines of historic beauty and sanctity, men should be vision-led and God-inspired! Who can utter the thoughts that come thronging into mind when he stands, for the first time, in the grey old Abbey of England, thinking of the mighty dead who sleep there? Descending into the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, one looks upon the sleeping-place of Nelson, the mighty lord of the sea, and the tomb of Wellington, the greatest commander of the English race. What thoughts, what historic memories, what hopes come unbidden to the heart, recalling the day when first I stood in that other mausoleum at Springfield where rest the mortal remains of our prophet-President! The City Temple is also a shrine where the vision of God has shone in the bright face of genius, and His whisper has been heard in sweet voices whose echoes still haunt its pillars and arches. Here your fathers worshipped; here your mothers prayed; and here their sons made the great surrender which is victory, going hence into scenes of labour and peril—even into the trenches—carrying the light of God in their hearts! It is thus that places have power over our spirits, by virtue of noble associations, inspiring lofty thoughts and filling our

hearts with feelings we can neither define nor resist.

What is the Church, and wherein lies its power and glory? In its ceremonial, its ritual, its dogma? No; the Church is the House of the Eternal, "a home for the lonely," and its power lies in its deep, still, creative vision of God. What do the churches of England need to-day more than all else besides, toiling amid conditions so strange and trying? More ritual, more definition, more doctrine? Nay, verily; albeit these things have their value, and theology has its abiding ministry of setting great ideas in order for the habitation and comfort of the intellect. But surely the sovereign need of the churches of England, as of all lands now and always, is a profound, intense, exalting vision of the living God, that so they may be fortified for the tasks of to-day and for the vast problems confronting them on the morrow of the war. And just as surely the highest service of the Church to the State is to furnish still, strong men who have clear insight for a tangled time; men who can control a great democracy by the Word of God in their hearts, and His will in their hands. God grant us such vision as came to Isaiah in the Hebrew temple of old:

Then the Temple filled with cloud,  
Even the House of the Lord;  
Porch bent and pillar bowed;  
For the presence of the Lord,

In the glory of His cloud,  
Had filled the House of the Lord.

Let us go further and ask how this vision came to Isaiah; not as to the divine process by which it was revealed, but as to the life of the prophet leading up to that hour. Jonathan Edwards—perhaps the greatest thinker America has known—was one day alone in the woods in prayer, and there came, as he tells us, “a view that was for me extraordinary of the glory of the Son of God”; and they called him after that the “new Isaiah.” No doubt others were in the Temple with Isaiah at that very moment who saw no vision, as there were those who heard the Sermon on the Mount and saw only a sun-browned peasant-mystic; as there were some who listened to Joseph Parker in this Temple, and thought only of his choice English and his picturesque oratory. Why did one man behold God on His high throne, awful yet gracious, while others felt only a vague awe, or else went away unilluminated? Because at such times much has been going on in the heart, unconsciously, and the right word, or event, brings it to a crisis—as in the Alps a shout will sometimes set an avalanche in motion. Isaiah came to the Temple bringing his historic faith, his inherited piety, the great tradition of his fathers, his education and his experience, and a sense of the prophetic life of his people. But he also came sorely perplexed at the distracted condition of his coun-

try, with a feeling of impending disaster, and, like the Psalmist, the problem was too much for him till he "went into the sanctuary." There his confused mind was made clear, and his troubled heart was exalted in the light of a flash, bringing his whole being, his whole life, to a glow-point in the august vision of God—the soul of his race becoming incandescent in its faithful and heroic son.

Often it is so. Wentworth Webster tells, in his "Gleanings in Church History," of a minister who asked a humble saint in his flock how he was led into the new life. The man replied that it was through hearing, in the lesson of the day, the words: "As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand." The minister remarked that they were striking words, but he did not see how they could have made him a new man. "Don't you see, sir," was the reply, "before whom *I* stand—I felt myself standing before God!" Thus an old text lifted the veil at a moment when he least expected it, bringing him into the very throne-room of the Most High. Sometimes it is in deep sorrow, sometimes at the end of long, wistful vigils, sometimes in sin, the Unseen drops its veil and we are standing before God. William Wallace was made a patriot in a moment at the sight of a wrong done; so was Moses. Browning was right in his doctrine of the great, "eternal moments," when the whole life seems packed into a single hour of revelation and destiny.

But, while an hour of vision is all-transfiguring, we must remember that not all men have such hours of insight and ecstasy. Upon some the truth does not burst in splendour; it dawns slowly. Zinzendorf, one of the most saintly of men, could name no one day when he gave himself to God—or, rather, no day when he had not done so. Nor could Francis Asbury, the evangelist of the long road. Nor could Emerson, in whom religion was as natural as life, and as quiet. Whether this sense of divine reality comes suddenly in blinding splendour, or softly as a sunrise—the spiritual growing up sweetly through the natural—it is the one great human experience which unifies life, gives focus to our faith, clarity to our motives, puts a clear path before us, and a luminous universe round us. All that a man has thought, or dreamed, or done, his long study, his deep meditation, his practical acumen, his treasures of insight and experience are at hand, ready for the noblest uses, consecrated to the highest ends. Days of sorrow, books read, temptations resisted, the discipline of hardship, the loves of life and the fellowships of years, all are united and exalted in a dedicated life.

Consider finally the meaning and purpose of this vision of the Eternal in a beshadowed time; and here the vision speaks to the men of our age telling them what they most need to know. God is with us, He is in us—in the heart and will and character of humanity—and the fulfilment of His pur-

pose, in our human world, depends in a sense on our feeble, fumbling efforts. This truth has been taught us in our day, but, alas! in a way to obscure the truth of His transcendence, His superiority to the change and flux of time, and His awful yet loving sovereignty over the tides of human circumstance. "If there be a God, how can I be content to admit that He is other than myself?" asks Nietzsche. To such wild egotheism has the mad vanity of our age led. Surely, beyond that glib blasphemy human pride cannot go. Not so Isaiah. No, no; in that awful hour he fell on his face, prostrated by an overwhelming sense of the purity and majesty of the Eternal, grateful for the seraph wings that covered him from a light that blessed while it blinded. "Woe is me, woe is me; for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips!"

How unlike the strutting supermen of our day was that noble humility, that profound sense of moral unworthiness, that divine despair! If our visions make us vain, they are false fire that lures us into the bottomless bog! If our ideals ease the sense of moral pain in our hearts, they are lies from the pit! They are ghastly caricatures of a reality they defame and defile! Oh, how we need in this dark and tragic time the vision splendid, ineffable, all-cleansing, all-consecrating, that our hearts may be made pure of their vanity and our lips touched with fire! For, wrapped up in that

dazzling vision, there was a commission of high, hard, heroic service to his country and his age. Truly this lesson is for each of us, gathered in this place of vision—that the mighty God may bring to birth in us the light of His truth, and the glory of His love, and make us fellow-workers with Him in the redemptive making of humanity.

Have courage; we see the Morn!  
Never fear, tho' the Now be dark!  
Out of the night the Day is born;  
The Fire shall live from the spark.  
The world grows—yet not by chance;  
It follows some marvellous plan;  
Tho' slow to our wish the advance,  
God rules the training of Man.

## **THE HEART OF GOD**



O Lord, our Heavenly Father, most high, most lowly, whose throne is in eternity, but who dwellest also in the tabernacles of time, make our hearts a sanctuary of Thy presence, that by Thy divine humility we may be exalted, and by Thy holiness we may be made holy. Thy truth is unto everlasting, Thy mercy endureth for ever, Thy goodness never faileth, and our changing hearts have hope because Thou changest not. Visit us with Thy salvation, O Lord; cleanse our minds and dwell therein; remove our faith from the shifting sand and set it upon the rock of ages; and though our feelings ebb and flow, grant us security of soul in Thy steadfast truth, and refuge from forebodings in the peace of Thy will.

For the wonder of life and the fulness thereof, we praise Thy holy name; for the beauty of this day and the glory of it, we bless Thee and give thanks. Renew within us, we humbly pray, the sublime faith that sees behind the natural order, over it and within it, an Infinite Mind, a Moral Will, a kingdom of the Spirit which abides; and help us to enter into that realm, that we may live in Thee, as Thou livest in us, and through Thee render to our fellows a truer, purer, nobler service. Strengthen us for each new-born duty, for each divine opportunity, and fill us with Thy spirit that we may fulfil our mission on the earth, as He did who leadeth us in the way, the truth, and the life eternal.

Thou knowest us altogether, Thou lovest us unto the uttermost, Thy tender mercies are ever with us; guide us by Thy fatherly care amidst the shadows of time and the vicissitudes of mortality, and make our hearts warm with the answering love of Thy mighty heart. Heal the deep hurt and heart-ache of those who are in sorrow; cleanse the stain of those who have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight; reveal Thyself to those who wander in doubt, uncertain of the way, knowing not where they go. Enrich our hearts with pity and good will toward all men, that we may do unto others as we would that they should do unto us, and so fulfil the law and the prophets in the spirit and faith of Jesus our Master.

Mercy of God, teach us the beauty and wisdom of compassion, and help us by a practice of pity to know the Eternal Pity that is hidden, oftentimes, by the austere order of the world, that our hearts may be softened by a new tenderness, and our lives touched by a divine gentleness one to another. Let not the hardness of the world harden our minds, lest the vision fade and the way grow dim, leaving us to walk in the land of shadows. Make us wise to trust what is truest, deepest, and most tender in our hearts as a revelation of Thyself, following Him who lived Thy life of beauty and pity here below. In His name. Amen.

### III

#### THE HEART OF GOD

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he remembereth that we are dust."—*Psalms* 103: 13, 14.

**T**HESE words utter the deep and tender cry of the soul for God. Heard in every age, in every land, in every tongue, it is the most profound and moving cry that ever ascended from earth to heaven. It is the haunting undertone of all our mortal life—the still, sad, pathetic, heroic cry of humanity which many ages have not hushed. It comes from the depths, and rises to the heights. It is the one *motif* of which all religions are variations; the one theme of which all philosophies are expositions. It finds echo in the words of prophets, the sayings of sages, and the voices of the poets who set to song those yearnings which well up in every human heart, but which so few can ever express.

The first intuition of man was the key to his latest and highest philosophy. It is pointed out by Max Müller that among all races, whether Aryan or Semitic, the first name for God was Sky-Father—the source of Light, the fountain of Fertility, the overbrooding Beauty of the World. Ages have

passed since the Aryan races separated to travel north, east, south, west. They have formed many languages, they have founded many empires and philosophies; they have grown older, they may have grown wiser and better; but to-day when they make search for a name to express both love and awe, the infinite and the finite, they can but do what their first fathers did when gazing into the sky and feeling the presence of One who is "as far as far and as near as near can be"—they can but utter the primeval prayer in that form which will endure forever, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

Of course, the word "Father" has meanings to-day which it did not have when first it was heard in the morning of the world. As life has deepened, that word has deepened. As the human heart became more tender, that word became a repository of a profound and unutterable tenderness; so that when it fell from the lips of Jesus it had echoes which the earlier times did not hear. Ages of sorrowful and sweet experience have emptied into it, filling it with the noblest treasures of human thought and human dream. The human pilgrimage has been a long Emmaus walk, with hearts burning by the way. Each of us lives over again the story of humanity, as in the shadow of pre-natal gloom we repeated, in a measure, the physical evolution of the race. A boy loves his father with all his mind, and soul, and strength,

but he cannot know the meaning of love until he himself becomes a father, with yearnings no words may tell. Life is thus a revelation, and if we read it aright it is a perpetual disclosure of the Divine. For, as the best man is at his best as a father, so it is with God, the Father Almighty.

Let us ask a noble Psalmist of our own day to interpret for us the song of the Psalmist of old, that so we may hear an ancient truth in the accent of to-day. One of the truest poets of recent times was William Vaughn Moody, whose life, alas! had in it the pathos of unfinished things. The crown of his life was a trilogy of poetic dramas the burden of whose message is the unity of God and man, their inseparableness, and their eternal life together. The first was called "The Fire-Bringer," giving a new reading of the myth of Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods, which fire is the divine spark, the ray of white light we call the soul. The tragedy lies in the effort of man to be independent of God, and the drama closes with an insolent chorus of young men just awakened to the power of sensual delight. Man cannot live without God. When he tries to do so his life is a form of death. The second drama was entitled "The Masque of Judgment," portraying the anger of God at the weakness and wickedness of man, and His decree to destroy the race. But when the Divine Father destroys His wayward sons He annihilates Himself, and the

drama closes with a wail of desolate angels in an empty heaven. Here the daring truth is that God cannot live without man!

The third number of the trilogy was "The Death of Eve," and was to centre about the spiritual awakening and final sacrifice of the first Mother. Eve, having been the means of separation of man from God, is the heroic and beautiful means of reconciliation—the mother-heart the altar of eternal reunion. Having lived "ages of years," she has undergone a new spiritual awakening, and with clearing vision sees that her sin need not have been the final, fatal thing it seemed, since all the creatures of God live by and within His being, and cannot be estranged or divided from Him. Seeing this dimly, she feels the compulsion to return to the garden of Eden and there declare her vision. She seeks among her kindred for one with the sympathy and courage to go with her, and, being often refused, she accepts finally the companionship of Jubal—a lad of spiritual insight, a poet and musician—and with him sets out to find Cain and take him with her into the lost Paradise for the supreme reconciliation. Another act shows the age-stricken Adam groping his way back to the Garden, following Eve, yearning to participate in the new and glorious solution of life.

Unfortunately, the pen fell from the hand of the poet before he finished his drama, but we know

what the end was to be. There was to be a song by Eve celebrating the reunion of God and man, during which, as she rose to clearer and clearer light, she was gently to pass from the vision of her beholders. Death leaves many songs unsung, but we may take instead of the unwritten lyric the wonderful song of Pandora, in the first drama, as anticipating the song of Eve. Simple in structure, exquisite in phrase, it sings of the identity of the thoughts and desires of God and man, bringing back the voice of one who in his sense of the eternal value of beauty was a true poet, and by nature also a mystic with a feeling of the reality and nearness of God and of his own capacity for direct vision of Him and his own heart:

I stood within the heart of God;  
It seemed a place that I had known;  
(I was a blood-sister to the clod,  
Blood-brother to the stone.)

I found my love and labour there,  
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,  
My ancient rage, my old despair—  
Yea, all things that were mine.

I saw the spring and summer pass,  
The trees grow bare, the winter come;  
All was the same as once it was  
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart  
I felt God walk and gaze about;  
He spoke; His words seemed held apart  
With gladness and with doubt.

"Here is My meat and wine," He said,  
"My love, My toil, My ancient care;  
Here is My cloak, My book, My bed,  
And here My old despair.

"Here are My seasons; winter, spring,  
Summer the same, and autumn spills  
The fruits I look for; everything  
As on My heavenly hills."

Truly it is perfect, and it is profound, telling us of the invisible Friend who is with us, within us, of us, above us, our eternal Moral Comrade. Now take thought, and lay this truth to heart, for it is the sure foundation of all our faith and hope, here and hereafter. When we search our own hearts in quest of the highest good we know or dream, we discover God, since there is only one kind of goodness, and goodness in heaven is of a kind with goodness on earth; one with the goodness we know in our noblest hours or in the noblest men; like that, only unspeakably more perfect—the same in ethical quality, however it may differ in depth and degree. There are not two kinds of justice. No; justice, mercy, and truth in man are in the same category with justice, mercy, and truth in God, albeit in Him they have inexhaustible richness which we have never guessed, much less explored. Therefore, by an inevitable logic of life and faith, the noblest, purest, truest Man the world has known is the highest revelation of God that man may know on earth, or needs to know. Such is the gospel of Christ, the heart of it, the whole

of it, the height and depth of it, forasmuch as His life of love revealed the heart of God—for love is the highest thing in man and the deepest thing in God.

No one can define love, yet all of us know what it is. As a babe in the cradle our hearts went out unquestionably to the sweet face that bent over us in tenderness. That face was our heaven and its light was our constant sun. As young men and women our spirits awoke to that enchantment of love which no piled-up years can ever make us forget. As life deepened we felt the tug of new ties, new solitudes, new yearnings binding us to the little ones who came to hallow our home. How our hearts stand still when a shadow falls across their path! When one of them is taken away we learn that solemn, ineffable love of the dead, with its strange power to purify and exalt. Yet there is larger love still. If we have ever given our hearts to a high human cause, as Lincoln did, there comes a further discovery of the wonder of love—love that is insight and sympathy, love that craves to bless the unblessed, love that delights to serve the lowly, and dares to defend the disinherited; love that can be satisfied only by giving all for all. This love walks a sorrowful way, suffers with those who suffer, "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things," and so comes to know the love of God that is unutterable even by those who know it.



Such is the natural order of experience and adventure, in "the Road of the Loving Heart," and happy are they who follow it. Some one has said that there is a quiet little cemetery of the soul in which lie buried many of the ideas of our earlier years. Time was when we thought of God as a big man up in the sky, with long white beard, more stern perhaps than gentle, with two angels, who set down our ill deeds. Such a God has ceased to be the living God for us, although we may often lay lovely flowers of reminiscence on His tomb. When we became men we put away childish things, and too often we put away a child-like faith. Our days of intellectualism dealt with such huge words as the Absolute, the Ultimate, the Cosmic Consciousness, and other like high-sounding abstractions which we thought were what we wanted. The trouble was that they were unmoral or unhuman, and unless God is both moral and human He is not a living God for thirsty souls. Carlyle found no joy in his worship of "a conflux of eternities." It chilled his heart. Many men have left the Church because its God is not great enough, not good enough to meet their needs, for, strange as it may seem, the more human God is the more divine the life of man will be.

Not until we see God as the Father of all souls—not simply "like a Father," as a Psalmist said, as if it were only a symbol, an analogy, an allegory, but the actual Father of men, as revealed in the

life of Jesus,—do we behold the highest truth. There is made known what love really is in its utmost sweetness of sacrifice and redemption. Love is social; it cannot live alone. Heaven was never a hermitage. Humanity could not worship an Infinite Egoist. Such is the deep and beautiful truth of which the Trinity is the symbol—the truth of the eternal society. Older than our religion, as old as the home and the family, it is a vision of God through the home as a family in Himself. Love is creation. It cannot be inactive; it must devise order, goodness, beauty, joy. God does not love the world because He made it; He made it because He is love. Here lies the secret of the strange and haunting beauty of the world, and the eternal motive behind it. Love is also providence. It cannot be content with the joy of creation, but must follow and watch over what it has made with absorbing solicitude and care. Men of old seemed to think that God made the world, set it going, and sat on the edge of it watching it. But love is never idle, much less aloof, and it must stoop to share the lot of those whom it loves.

Alas! many in our day, to whom it is not difficult to believe in God, the Creator, find it hard to believe in His loving care. Storms desolate the earth. Pestilence and famine fill myriad graves. Youth is blighted in its bud. Forever the cup of death is pressed to the lips of love. War, pillage, cruelty, and brutality might make human life a

hell. There are heartless tyrannies that endure. How can one talk of the loving care of God in face of these facts? Why did not God make a thornless world and fill it with noble men, true women, and a race just, gentle, and generous? Because He could not do it. Character cannot be created; it must be achieved. It is not a gift, but a trophy—something wrought out amid trials and tears, as Polasek has shown us in his figure of a man finding himself and setting himself by laboriously chipping away the stone in which he is imprisoned. Suppose a man were to have a family created for him in an instant—a wife, a boy, a girl sitting about a table in a lovely home which he never saw before. Would it be his family? No. He might learn to know and love them deeply, but they would not be his family because not created by his love, not nourished from his heart, and not sanctified by his solicitude. Omnipotence does not mean arbitrariness. What love cannot do God cannot do. There are methods love cannot use, acts it cannot perform, weapons it cannot employ. Divine love looks like weakness until we know what it really is, how it works, and the path it follows. The love of God is more than a mere indulgent good nature, more than an indiscriminate, maudlin sentiment. It is wise, and therefore takes the long look; relentless, and therefore seemingly austere; ruling, not arbitrarily, not impatiently, but with inflexible purpose and educative

discipline—permitting the prodigal to wander if he will, knowing, as he does not know, that riotous living leads to husks, and these to the coming to himself, and that to the penitent and painful return and to the discovery of a love that would not let him be happy in exile!

Of love is born the hope of immortality, and the love of God is its only sure basis and token of promise. What sunshine there is in that truth! The more deeply we love wife and child and friend the more surely may we know that there is One who loves them more than we do. Thus our truest love may teach us of a "Love Divine all love excelling," to which we need not fear to commit the lives of our living and the graves of those we call the dead. Men and women, lay to heart the awful and wonderful truth that God loves each of us as if there were no other in the world, and all of us as though we were one child at His knee. Yea, He loves me, even me, distinctly, separately, passionately, eternally—how can it be! And He loves you, each of you, with a love peculiar, particular, unutterably precious—loves you unto the uttermost, and cannot be happy without your love in return! Let us not ask ourselves whether we love God or not. Let us trust His love of us, trust it in our sorrows, our needs, our sins, knowing that love never faileth—for God is love.

And so, beside the Silent Sea,  
I wait the muffled oar;

No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen  
Thy creatures as they be,  
Forgive me if too close I lean  
My human heart on Thee.

**"THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW"**

Almighty Father, of all comforters the best, of all teachers the wisest, of all helpers the most powerful, we beseech Thee, for a contrite heart, a conscience made pure by confession and forgiveness, a mind lifted up in prayer; that our morning worship may be acceptable in Thy sight and cleansing to our hearts. With reverence tempered by love, with a profound sense of Thy majesty and mercy, we renew our vows at this altar, invoking Thy presence to keep tryst with our souls in this hushed and holy hour. Forgotten be the things of yesterday, its toil, its turmoil, its failure, and its strife; remembered be that truth which makes us faithful and free and the love that never forgets.

Father of all souls, who art nearer to us than our own hearts, we would draw near to Thee, that our minds may be quickened and our spirits purified; that so we may be brave for the duties of life and the great adventures of faith, following an Inner Light amid the fluctuating shadows of time. Let us not wander from Thy truth, let us not turn away from Thy wise and holy will, lest we be of those who seek but never find, and journey but never arrive. Teach us to live in quietness and confidence in a troubled time, trusting the things that abide amidst widespread wreck and ruin; walking in the faith that what we know not now will be made known to us in an after-time, when we are worthy and able to receive it.

Take down our towering pride, O Lord; forgive our petty vanity, and make us members of that Divine order of Humility in which the Master is the servant of all, washing their wayward feet and showing them the might of meekness and the power of gentleness. O how can the spirit of man be proud in the presence of Thine infinite humility, in which Thou dost bow down and minister to us, rebuking our haughtiness, and teaching us that he is greatest who serves most faithfully, most gladly, most gently. O may we learn of Him who is our Teacher to be meek and lowly of heart, patient in trial, prompt in obedience, serving Thy will.

Wherefore have we life if it be not to serve Thy purpose in the redemptive making of humanity, not carelessly, not restlessly, not inconstantly, but nobly, wisely, joyously in the light of eternity? Lord, our lives are but a muddled memory of what they ought to be, falling so far below the ideal Thou hast set in our hearts; heal what is broken, add what is lacking, and fulfil Thy will in us, lest we die without ever having lived. O wash us and make us clean, not our feet only, but our hearts, our heads, our hands, that we may serve Thee what days are given us to live and return to Thee at eventide. In His name. Amen.

#### IV

### "THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW"

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."—*John 13: 7.*

**L**ET us go now to that Upper Room on the last night which Jesus spent with His friends and witness the sacrament of His farewell. Of all the shrines of humanity that is the one place where the heart of God is most clearly revealed, and its very throb is felt to this day. It stands at the heart of Christianity, and is touched with an abiding and ineffable sanctity, linked with the highest thoughts, the deepest feelings, and the most exalted fellowships. It is the sanctuary of the greatest faith of mankind, as it is the symbol of the profoundest sorrow of the world and its divinest hope. Ages have come and gone, but that Room remains the symbol of the place where man opens his whole being to the Highest, and in humble penitence, brotherly love, and devout prayer renews his faith and hope.

Would that by some art we could bring back that scene of old, with its light and shadow, its play of emotion, and its atmosphere of exaltation—the dignity and gentleness of the Master, His serenity of spirit, His haunting words, and the



mingled amazement and tenderness of His friends. What must have been their feelings when He appeared, girded with a towel, a basin of water in His hand, and, kneeling, began to wash their feet as a slave might have done! No wonder Peter protested, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" He feels that the Master is degraded by appearing in such a capacity, and all his generous instincts are aflame. He cannot endure it. Never was pride more exquisitely rebuked than in that acted parable, in which was revealed the secret of true greatness and the loftiness of true humility. Forgotten now was their petty strife for precedence, as the Master became their servant, washing even the feet of Judas before they went on their dark errand of evil!

How tawdry are all the honours of earth beside that exalted and sweet humility of service which sanctifies by its very beauty! It makes us wistful to think of it, touching us with the sadness of all perfect things, like the old-gold loveliness of a sunset, like a sweet bird singing at dawn, like some act of artless goodness wrought by one much loved and long since fallen into dust. Aye, there is need that we go often to that Upper Room, taking with us our low views of life, our tormenting doubts, our terrible fears, our unspoken blasphemies, our silent defeats, our secret betrayals, our nameless sorrows. Have we no Upper Room? Are the revelations of that hour spent? Not so!

Thither let us go, climbing with all our weight of woe up the winding stairway to that place of vision, that so we may look back from its serene height upon the wind-swept tombs of long ago and the graves still fresh in our hearts, the while we learn to lay to heart the principle of the text: "What I do thou knowest, not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Here, indeed, is the great principle and mystery of all providence, and there is no peace of heart for us until we make terms with it. The words of Isaiah are eternally true to the ways of God with man: "I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths they have not known." Every step of our mortal life is a venture of faith, in which we are divinely led while blindly following. No one knows what a day may bring forth, much less what a day means. Every day of their life together, Jesus might have repeated this text to His disciples, "What I do thou knowest not now." They did not understand the meaning of those days when they walked in the wonder and awe of His presence and heard His words. How could they? If they had occasional glimpses of insight, as when Peter made his great confession, His life remained a revealed mystery, not a mystery revealed. They saw no profound theology in that dark Cross outside the city gate. They saw only a ghastly, heart-shaking tragedy! Not one of them imagined that such a scene had

in its darkness "the master light of all our seeing," revealing what lies at the heart of this shadowy world. "But thou shalt know hereafter," and as His life came back to memory in aftertime its deep meanings were unveiled.

What was true of the life of Jesus and its unfolding meaning in the hearts of His friends is every day made plain to us in our own lives. With what deep truth your mother might have repeated this text to you in the days that come not back! How could you know the depth of her love, the reason for her wise severity, the meaning of her unwearying solicitude, and the secret of her hopes and dreams? It was impossible; but all the habits of that old home, its patient love, its tender care, its joy at birth, its sorrow at the funeral farewell, have holy meanings for you now. To-day is the "hereafter" of former years. As you think of your mother to-day, after the revelations of the years, those white hands worn thin in your service become prophetic tokens of a Divine Love that hath in it the secret of unknown redemptions. No man can raise a child and not have a growing reverence for his own father and mother, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken in this text. Thus the present hides from us its meaning, as the sunlight hides the depths of the sky.

Evermore the future expounds the past and explains the present, as the first act of a drama

means one thing at its close, another and a different thing at the end of the second act, and still another, it may be, at the end of the play. Nor do we know the true meaning of the first act until the curtain falls and the lights go out. Some things become clear to us as we go forward, and as the years interpret one another in the natural deepening and unfolding of life; but we may not hope to understand the whole meaning of our lives on this earth. At the end, as at the beginning, much will remain hidden. It should not seem strange that it is so, because our life on earth is greater than we know and its meanings reach out beyond time and death. Its very incompleteness is prophetic. How foolish it is, then, to let impatience rob us of faith because we cannot fathom the thought of God! More foolish still are those who declare the universe a madhouse and the law of being the emanation of an Infinite Idiot because they cannot follow the divine ways. My plea is that we should take the principle of this text, so inevitable in the nature of things, lay it to heart, trust it, and apply it to the vicissitudes that overtake us.

And after this manner. Perhaps a man has suffered a crushing disappointment, such as befell Robertson, of Brighton, when his ambition to be a soldier was thwarted. It would be an error, of course, to attribute all his profound melancholy to that one fact, for he had a nature not easily brightened, “a heart that asked for more than life

has to give," and he knew not the knack of making much out of little. Yet he never got over that first blow. In his biography no light falls on the page from his little children. Wife and mother are hardly named. His work, his genius, and even his sincere faith seemed to open no fountain of joy in his heart. What he might have been as a soldier we know not. But he could never have served his race in arms, perhaps, as he did in the pulpit. Indeed, he brought into the pulpit the high daring of soul, the chivalry and courage of faith, the gallantry of heart which made him a soldier in the armies of God. His very disappointment, joined with his genius and his rare and noble eloquence, gave to the world such a sublime sermon as that on "The Loneliness of Christ." Nor must we forget our text when we recall his too early death.

Another man is beshadowed by a great, benumbing sorrow, like that which visited Southey, who is nowhere braver or more lovable than in the letters he wrote in his grief. In his youth the loss of a dear friend at Oxford gave his soul a shock which early inured him to death; his strength did not fail him when there fell the blow which changed the world for him—the death, at ten years, of his idolised boy, Herbert, the centre of his hopes and happiness. It broke his heart, but not his faith. Hear these words from a letter which he wrote under the cloud:

"Wherefore do I write to you? Alas, because I know not what to do. To-morrow, perhaps, may bring with it something like the beginning of relief. To-day I hope that God will support me, for I am as weak as a child. I am wanting in no effort to appear calm and to console others. Many blessings are left me—abundant blessings, more than I have deserved. I have strong ties to life and many duties yet to perform. Reason will do something, Time more, Religion most of all. The loss is but for this world; but as long as I remain in this world I shall feel it."

What a brave and manly letter, telling us that his anchor held in a dark storm! How much better than to let go, drift, and lose the way! Nothing so stays a man as a secret, silent, inward trust in and fellowship with the Eternal, which dares to follow when the path is dark and wait for the revelations of the future. Aye, but how hard it is when one loses faith, as Clough did—if, indeed, he ever attained it, for he seems to have had faith in faith, but not faith itself. Romanes was another, though, happily, he found his way back to faith. The two most precious things in life, he said, are faith and love, without which existence is vanity and vexation of spirit. Even love does not fill the void left by a loss of faith.

How do men lose faith? The process is deep and hidden, deeper far than mere intellectual difficul-

ties, which are more the result than the cause of this sad bereavement of soul. Denial of the faith, dogged opposition to the ideal, rejection of the spiritual view of life have their origin in the region of the emotions, not in the intellect. Some sorrow, it may be, some sin, some dark inner tragedy secretes an acid which dissolves the pearl of great price. Perhaps in youth a man dreamed a dream; but the world mocked his dream, and it faded, never to return. His idealism has soured into cynicism; or, like Schopenhauer, he aimed at something high and missed it. Or he trusted a friend, and was betrayed; or he loved a woman, and she broke her word, or he broke his; or death snatched from his side one who was the centre of all his joy, and the light that was in him became darkness. It is life, its dark facts, its rebuffs, its deep stabs, its seeming ruthlessness, that shatters faith and poisons the warm currents of the heart—if we let it do so. It is at such times that the principle of the text comes with healing on its wings, asking us to look for the light that is in the midst of the cloud, and to wait for the wind to cleanse the sky. Like Job, we must learn to trust God, though He seems to slay us, keeping our hearts warm and tender and our minds from that slow hardening which shuts out the light.

Nor is that all. There is strength in this principle which all men need to-day, viewing the wide welter of world-tragedy. Those innumerable dead

who fell on the "far-flung battle-lines" died for something beyond death and the life they so freely gave. They died that other men might live, that certain great ideals, however dimly or distortedly conceived, may have assurance of persistence. Aye, they died that liberty, justice, law, and mercy might not perish from the earth—died at the urge of mighty forces using them for ends they could not see, working toward issues which we must believe to be good. When we paint the horror of war, showing its orgy of terror, the very blackness of the background makes more vivid the white splendour of that in man which will face that horror in behalf of a principle, an ideal. There is something in man beyond the reach of death, else he would not give his life for it. Out of this tragedy will come a new Europe, a new world, a new and nobler era. God, even our God, still speaks amidst the storm and woe of war: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Forever stands the promise that some time, somewhere we shall know the meaning of what befalls us here. Often we learn it in this life, as the disciples learned the deep, beautiful, unguessed, redeeming truth in the life and tragedy of Jesus. More often we know only in part—a small part, hardly more than a hint—and must wait until that which is perfect has come. My dear friend, Edward Waite, has this line in his book of poems: "The life of earth is an experience of things un-



familiar; the after-life is a renewal of the old familiarity." Even so, but we shall bring to the old scenes a new light, a more adequate interpretation, a more revealing insight. No man, when a boy, ever had half the joy running across the meadow that he gets from seeing his boy—not to say his grandson—on that very spot. Age has a vision of the beauty and grace—and folly—of youth which youth does not have. Youth is the drama, in which actors are absorbed in their parts; age is the audience. As it is the old who see the loveliness of youth, and love it, seeing it in a softer and truer light, so in the deeper knowledge promised us the tangled and turbulent present will be made clear.

On the night of farewell Jesus trusted the power of memory, the ministry of reminiscence, as a mother does when she says good-bye to her boy who is going out to meet the dangers of the world. His entire demeanour had, as its background, the feeling that what He did would not be forgotten. Happy is he and safe who is armoured with holy memories in the dizzy hour of temptation, into whose heart comes the "touch of a vanished hand or the sound of a voice that is still," calling all that is best in the soul to stand fast. Peter remembered, and wept bitterly, to his cleansing; Judas forgot, and was lost—or else remembered too late, when sin had hardened into a dark and bitter despair that seeks solace in death. It is little we can

do for each other in the deeper things of life, but we can so live in the home, in the temple of prayer, in the places of play, as to leave high and pure memories in the hearts of our fellows—like that sermon which I heard nineteen years ago, while a young student in Boston, which has lived in my heart every day, its thought still vivid, its very tones still eloquent across the years. The preacher never knew until I told him years later. Happy the man who in the susceptible, formative season of youth hears such voices of comfort and command, of inspiration and leadership; they are a possession forever. Not yet have we learned the meaning of memory—its depth, its power, its revelation, its ministry to the life of faith, for that it leads us back over the path we have journeyed and helps us to a clearer exegesis of the often strange medley of our lives. What a wonderful line is that of the Psalmist: "All the ends of the earth shall remember, and return to the Lord,"—as if at last the redemption of the race is to be a grand reminiscence!

And, finally, let us write the law of this text in our hearts as a new prophetic token of the beyond-life, with its assurances that death does not rule the world, and that what is dim now will be made plainer further on. It is like the branch which came floating out of the unknown to answer the doubts of Columbus and his sailors; it gives tidings of a New World that lies beyond the sea

and the night. Many things remain dark on this "bank and shoal of time," many things that baffle our hearts and dismay our minds—"but thou shalt know hereafter," if not here, then in that nearer and clearer Presence into which, by His grace, we shall be admitted, and when we shall know as we are known. At last that other saying of Jesus will be fulfilled when He said, in answer to the wistful questions of the human heart, "In that day ye shall ask Me nothing."

## **THE HIGHER LOYALTY**

Infinite Father, in all our wanderings of mind, amid the cares that litter our days, and even despite the sins that becloud, our secret soul thirsteth for Thee. It is this need that brings us here in this sweet fellowship of prayer; that each may share the faith of all, and that all may be lifted out of the shadow of time into the light of eternity. Open our eyes to read the story of Thy love, its pages moistened by penitential tears, illumined with glad hopes, and hallowed by the joyous songs of all times. We would be of that company who pray for one another as though we had but one voice and one nature, as though we were but one child at Thy knee.

Remember, O Thou unforgetting Friend, those who are suffering any grievous wrong, and cleanse them of bitterness and resentment by the breath of Thy presence. We bring Thee those who are bearing heavy burdens, from which none amongst us is entirely free, and ask that they be given courage and strength. We beseech Thee for those who have failed of the highest things, and are afraid now to make any promise of fresh beginning; those to whom life has been hard, and who have been so taken by surprise by the ill that can do that they hardly dare pray with hope. Lift them, we pray Thee, with all others who are cast down, out of the mire and the clay, and set their feet on the Rock of Ages.

We bless Thee that all our highest visions tend to the plainest holiness and righteousness, and we pray that in our lives the smallest things may be touched and transfigured by the greatest truths. May our deepest faith, our noblest thought, our sweetest aspiration go into all the trivialities and minuteness of our daily tasks, so that the crooked may be made straight and the rough places plain. Fill us with contempt of unfaithful ease; sustain us in loyalty to our heavenly visions; and wake in us a soul to follow Thee, not fitfully, but with constancy and joy.

With all the earth we veil our faces before Thee, the Father everlasting, who fillest the world with Thy beauty and majesty. God of all worlds, while our fathers worship Thee above in Thy clearer and happier presence, may we bow here below in wise trust and faithful hope, and offer our humble and grateful prayer. O Thou who knowest what we cannot speak receive our broken words, and grant us Thyself. In the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

## V

### THE HIGHER LOYALTY

"Be thou faithful unto death."—*Revelation 2: 10.*

**I**T sometimes happens that a thinker by emphasis upon one aspect of truth so identifies his name with it that the one recalls the other. He may even gather his insight into a focus of one word until the word, so enlarged, becomes a kind of key to his life. So Stevenson used the word "courtesy," and Shelley the word "beauty," and wherever one sees those two words they recall those shining names. Thus Truth imparts somewhat of her immortality to her lovers and followers. Another example is the late Theodore Munger, that noble and stately preacher who succeeded to the pulpit of Horace Bushnell. Years of deep and happy brooding on "The Pity of Christ" lent to his spirit an ineffable charm, until, toward the end, he seemed to wear the benign aspect of his Master. After this manner Josiah Royce—now so lately gone to the Land of New Discoveries—has taught the philosophy of loyalty with such earnestness and insight that that word has become the keyword to his thinking, and, as those who knew him can testify, the keynote of his life as well. Not unnaturally, then, when he

seeks the "Sources of Religious Insight," we find his thought converging to a focus in his lecture on "The Religion of Loyalty." There was little new in the book except a synthesis of all his former works, touched with a fervour of eloquence that turns a philosophy into a gospel.

Never has there been a greater need than to-day for a strenuous preaching of all the higher loyalties. Loyalty, yes, but to what and to whom? Loyalty, first of all, to God the Father Almighty, allegiance to whom is the basis and inspiration of all the loyalties of mortal life. We need, as never before, to make men realise that they cannot touch the higher and finer achievements of life until they have been won to this supreme allegiance. It is because of the weakening in society of this first loyalty that the other and more visible ones are in peril. Those who think to eliminate God from modern thought not only discourage the virtuous will of the world, but they cut at the root of all the loyalties. If God did not exist, said Voltaire, it would be necessary to invent Him; which was his picturesque and inverted way of saying that the best proof of the fact of God is that we cannot do without Him.

All our higher human life derives directly from God, as colour from sunlight. True loyalties that neither waste nor wear out—loyalty of patriot to country, of friend to friend, of husband to wife, of the soul to truth—have here their origin. Here

is fed true patriotism, like that of Pym, of whom Morley says: "He thought it part of the religion of a man to see that his country be well governed." Those men who have built society, who have called forth the reverence and devotion of their fellows, have always been those who, in their turn, have been possessed by the supreme loyalty. As some one has well said, it was ever the God manifest in them which won their fellows; and to the degree in which a man possesses this high fidelity, by so much does he become a real leader. Obviously, there is more in the word loyalty than we have been wont to see. We get it from the French *loi* and the Latin *lex*, according to which a loyal man is a man faithful to the law. But that is a meagre definition, a pale description of the word as Royce uses it.

Let us give ear, then, to a great thinker who finds in loyalty the key alike to philosophy and life, if so be that we may learn not only to whom we are to be loyal, but how and why. Of the sources of insight Royce names individual experience, social life, the disclosures of reason and the will, and the mission of sorrow; but they are dim, he holds, unless what they show us is authenticated by loyalty to what we see. Only as we "practically believe," as Carlyle would say, and act upon what is thus disclosed, does it become real to us. In this way loyalty becomes the trysting-place between God and the soul, the meeting-place of



absolutism and pragmatism, the testing-place of truth. It is easy to see, from this, why so many of us fail of the highest vision; and it explains why much of our faith rests upon the experience of others, whose loyalty supports our trust. By the same token, it suggests what service we may render to others by being loyal ourselves. Hear him:

“However far you go in loyalty you will never regard your loyalty as a mere morality. It will also be a religion. It supplies in its unity the way to define the ideal of what your individual experience seeks in its need, of what your social world longs for as a common salvation, of what reason conceives as the divine meaning of the world, of what the rational will requires you to serve as the will of God. Through loyalty, then, not only the absolute moral insight, as you grow in grace and, persist in service, may be, and will be, gradually revealed to you. So be loyal—that is, so seek, so accept, so serve your cause that thereby the loyalty of all men everywhere, through your example, through your influence, through your love and practice of loyalty, shall be aided, furthered, increased—so far as in you lies. Be so loyal to your own cause as thereby to advance the cause of universal loyalty.”

Perhaps the phrase “your cause,” as here used, is somewhat ambiguous, too suggestive of “those

one-eyed, grim-jawed folk, who see but one thing, and never let go." Reformers may irritate us at times, but we must honour them for their tenacity to a fixed idea, their disregard of the claims of self-interest, and the way in which they brush aside personal pleasure not as a temptation, but as a troublesome trifle in the path. Not many reformers are needed, however; it would be a mistake for us to measure our lives by theirs. Only a few have laid upon them the task of awakening the torpor of a nation. Most of us are humble workers in fields where patient fidelity and hopeful association with others is of more value than agitation. What, then, is our cause? It is the duty or task that lies next to us, whether of our own choice or not, loyalty to which is the path to the divinest things.

How vividly this is shown by William Canton in his "Child's Book of Saints," where he gives a charming version of St. Simeon Stylites, who lived for three years on top of a pillar, in sun and shower, schooling his soul in prayer. An angel came and bade him come down from his strange oratory, and led him into a valley where a herder was keeping his flock. With the herder was a little girl whose parents had been killed by robbers, and whom the herder had rescued, nursed, and taught, and now she ran, in happy confidence, by his side. The saint looked at them both and the angel told the story and pointed out the lesson

of it all. Running to the herder, St. Simeon cried:

“ Oh, son, now I know why thou art so pleasing in the eyes of God. Early hast thou learned the love which gives all and asks nothing, which suffereth and is kind, and this I have not learned. A small thing, and too common, it seemed to me; but I see that it is holier than austerities, and avail-eth more than fasting, and is the prayer of prayers. Late have I sought thee, thou ancient truth; late have I found thee, thou ancient beauty; yet even in the gloaming of my days may there still be light enough to win my way home.”

Too late do we all learn this simple truth. Looking too high for what is near by, we miss the presence of the Divine in the facts and duties next to us. For example of what he means by loyalty Royce gives the story of Ida Lewis, who was for fifty years the keeper of a lighthouse on the Atlantic coast. Her husband went out in a storm to aid those in distress, and did not come back, and she took his place. Despite her loneliness and sorrow, she kept the light burning through all the nights and storms of many years, and saved, in all, eighteen lives with her own strong hands. Her labour thus had its perils. It had, what was much harder to endure, its daily call for fidelity. She may not have chosen such a life, but she chose how

to live it when she found it. Climbing the lonely stairway, she did her duty,

Patient through the watches long,  
Serving most with none to see,

and this spirit, our philosopher thinks, is the secret of the highest human life. All that the deepest thinker can do is to interpret its meaning, and what it means for the world to have such lives lived, a very little thought will show us.

Such was the "cause" of one loyal and heroic life. Our cause may be our home, our family, our country, our church, our science, some task left undone by one fallen asleep; but whatever it is, loyalty to it is the great thing. In spring days the witchery of young love carries the world captive away, but how few realise what that love is! To the cynic it is only the glamour of passion, but to one who has eyes to see it is a lovely unveiling of the awful meaning and beauty of the human soul. When Browning wrote:

World, how it walled about  
Life with disgrace,  
Till God's own smile came out,  
That was Thy face,

he knew that such love is a revelation of God. That we do not see it so, and too often let its rosy dawn fade into a colourless noonday, is tragedy. To Romeo, Juliet was a religion; to Juliet, Romeo was the universe. Suppose they had lived and

kept that vision through long years, hiding it in their hearts and serving it on their knees. Suppose little children had come to their home, bringing new solitudes and joys, binding them still closer together. Then suppose that years have passed, and their children have gone away, some to other homes and some into the great Home beyond. Grown old together, they are sitting in the twilight, lovers still, uniting the glow of dawn with the soft farewell fires of evening. There is a knock at the door, and some great thinker enters and interprets the meaning of it all:

“Behold, what a noble and beautiful thing you have done without knowing it. By your pure love you have made love more holy all over the world. By your loyalty to your heavenly vision you have made it easier for all men everywhere to believe that there is Love in the heavens, whence our human love comes, and whither at last it returns. You have added to the beauty of the earth, making every home more secure, every sanctity more sacred, every hope more radiant.”

Surely Royce is right in holding that to such a spirit of loyalty every lot in life, however humble, however hard, will yield a meaning, and become a place of vision. Take away all emotional and imaginative colourings and look at this spirit for what it is and for what it does. In the first place,

it steadies the soul amid the whims of passion and the caprices of fancy. Every one of us knows how fickle moods are and how easily, how imperceptibly we are swayed by them from the true path of the soul. Therefore, to have a "cause," and to be loyal to it, keeps us with patient, sometimes dogged, wisdom to the only path that leads to truth and character. It gives definite purpose to life, while restraining us from the waywardnesses which beset us on every side. In the second place, it gives the deepest and sweetest peace we can know upon the earth. No matter what ill-fortune may assail, what scorn may fall, there is a still centre of joy in the soul of a man who has been loyal to what he knows is best. Men are not broken to pieces from outside misfortune. They go to pieces on the inside as the result of secret disloyalty to the heavenly vision which, in some degree, shines upon every soul.

And, finally, this steadiness and serenity are the very conditions of that clear-seeing which we call Vision. Truth held in theory enters into the soul of the man who is loyal to it, and becomes its own best proof. Those dear old people in the white country meeting-house, whose kneeling figures rise up before me now, may have held archaic forms of theology, but they knew God the Father Almighty in a way many an élite and cultured thinker cannot imagine. They loved God, and had been loyal to Him through long years, in sickness

and in health, in sunshine and in shadow, and they had found that His "faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds,"—aye, through the clouds and beyond. Such assurance is for their children, however cultured they may fancy themselves to be, if they will practise a like noble loyalty. They were faithful unto death, and received a crown of light—

As unto one who hears  
A cry above the conquered years.

If it were a choice between the widest culture that is only mingled query and protest, and the patient and revealing loyalty of Ida Lewis in her lighthouse, who would not choose the life of that noble woman? She knew the things at which philosophers guess. She was admitted to the ultimate secrets of life. But, in truth, there need be no such choice, for the highest culture, when touched by the same spirit of loyalty, leads always to the highest faith. The wider our knowledge of the best that has been thought and dreamed in the big world, the richer our store of truth to apply in the little world in which we live, as the violet seed takes to its heart the universal sunshine and rain and sends them forth in fragrance and beauty. Such is the process of that culture of the soul which is life at its best. Let us be loyal to our cause all the time, everywhere—faithful unto death, and we, too, shall receive a crown of joy.

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Life may be given in many ways,  
And loyalty to truth be sealed  
As bravely in the closet as in the field.

In one of the Phantasies of George Macdonald are these words: "Somehow or other," said the knight, "notwithstanding the beauty of this country of Faërie, in which we are, there is much that is wrong in it. If there are great splendours, there are corresponding horrors; heights and depths; beautiful women and dreadful fiends; strong men and weaklings. All a man has to do is to better what he can. If he will settle it with himself, that even renown and success are in themselves of no great value, and go to his work with a cool brain and a strong will, he will get it done; and fare none the worse in the end."

"But he may not always come off well," said his companion.

"Perhaps not," rejoined the knight; "perhaps not in the particular act; but with the result of his life time will content him."





**CAN WE FOLLOW JESUS TO-DAY?**

Infinite Father, out of the toil of the week, its fret and care and sorrow, we assemble in Thy name, seeking the peace of the Sabbath day, with its refreshment, its refining beauty, its Divine inspiration. Rekindle the light of eternity within us; quicken every high and holy aspiration; forgive all our sins; that, unfettered by evil, we may be wise to know Thy truth, strong to do Thy will, and quiet to hear the whisper of Thy word. Impart to us the virtues by which Thou art known; answer our prayer by making us worthy of what we ask; exalt our hearts by the nearness of Thy presence; and lead us from faith to faith, that we may know the joy of going forward into new lands of truth and new ways of service.

Renew within us, our Father, the first joy of the religious life, the first and most surprising, as it is the last, the sweetest, the most inexhaustible; that Thou lovest each of us distinctly, separately, as if there were no other soul on earth and we were left alone with Thee. Let us not lose this intimate and tender faith in the thought of Thy larger and longer care of the world, lest there fall over us the feeling that we are blessed only incidentally, and by accident, by a vague benevolence. And may the reality of Thy love for us draw us into a closer, deeper fellowship with one another, that we may find in Thy love the law of true fraternity and in Thy good will the measure of our life.

Teach us, O Lord, by following Thy way, to know the truth as it is in Jesus, in whose life of Divine obedience and brotherly love Thou hast shown us what it means to live, and what life may become by the power of Thy love. Show us that purity is not innocence, but conquest; that it is the trophy of men and women who have met temptations, sometimes falling before them, but at last overcoming them by Thy grace, until their lives became habitual victories. O make us true followers of Him who in a world of cruelty was kind, and who, deserving the best, received the worst—but forgave and triumphed by the power of love.

How high, how noble, how ineffably true, how richly human is the life Thou wouldst have us live, following the Ideal made flesh, fulfilling Thy dream in our mortal days, faithful in the service of Thy Truth and in love of one another. O forgive our failure, our falling below Thy desire; encourage us by Thy healing and purifying mercy; strengthen us in our struggle for the best, that we may be true to Thee, true to each other, true to Him who leads and lifts us toward the light. Hear us, Lord, in His name, and help us to be more worthy of our prayer and of Him in whose spirit we would worship. Amen.

## VI

### CAN WE FOLLOW JESUS TO-DAY?

"If any man would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."—*Matthew* 16: 24.

**I**N that remarkable book called "Bushido," the author quotes the following words of an old priest of Japan who lived two centuries ago: "Talk as he may, a Samurai who ne'er has died is apt in decisive moments to flee and hide. Him who once has died in the bottom of his breast, no spears nor all the arrows can pierce." And the author adds: How near we come to the portals of the temple whose builder taught, "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it"! That is to say, what appealed to the author of "Bushido" was the heroic note in the life of Jesus, its high demand, its spirit of daring adventure. It was no life of passive endurance, pale with the weakness of pity, but a new and wonderful kind of courage, not only pure but purifying, calling for fortitude in those who would follow Him.

Of course, we preach our smug and prudential morality, the gospel of safety first—which seems so sane because we are so selfish; but that is not the highest wisdom—and down in our hearts we

know it. If we search for what is deepest in ourselves, we know very well that no real man can be satisfied with mere prudence, though many have tried. Not self-preservation, but self-devotion, is the deepest fact about our humanity—as England has learned anew to its redemption. The only thing that can really satisfy a man of red blood is an object of devotion, not himself, for which he can feel it worthy of himself to sacrifice himself unto the uttermost. Truly has it been said that no man is fully alive who is not ready to die for something, for some one—for that which makes it worth his time to live. And this fact we must keep in our minds while we ask the questions of the morning: Should we follow Jesus? What does it mean to follow Jesus? Can we follow Him to-day? If so, how?

Obviously, the answer to the first question depends on what is meant by the second. If by following Jesus is meant a slavish, literal copying of His life, as some sects have interpreted it to mean, it is not at all certain that we ought to follow Him. Nor did He mean that we should follow Him after that manner. Much that Jesus did would be impracticable now in the different times in which we live. Suppose that on the morrow all men should set about to reproduce His life, dressing as He dressed, living as He lived, abjuring family ties, each one becoming a wandering teacher talking in parables, what then?

Society would cease to exist. Art, philosophy, science, commerce would be lost in a chaos worse confounded. Much evil would vanish, to be sure, and with it much good. No, what He asks is not imitation, but following; not copying, but obeying; not compulsion, but companionship. Because He is our Friend He asks us to walk in His way, and men of every age, of every corner of the earth, of every condition, then, and ever since then, have felt that His command was also an invitation; and those who have accepted it have found in His presence the power to do what He asks, and more, much more than words may tell.

When we honestly ask our own hearts whether we should follow Jesus, the answer that comes back from "the man in there" is not unlike the command of Jesus Himself, telling us that it is not only the noblest obligation but the highest privilege to walk in that way. It is as if our hearts had heard a half-remembered voice from the homeland, and its echo haunts us, stirring strange longings, wistful yearnings, and hopes that will not let us go. What, then, do we mean by following Jesus? Before we answer that question, let us ask what was meant by it in the ages ago, if so we may bring the light of the past to the leadership of the present. What the early Church meant by following its Master, we need not be told. It was a glad, unwavering obedience in the sense of His living Presence. Yet how different their thought

of Him was from our own. They doubted His Humanity; men of to-day doubt His Divinity. How world-far these two attitudes are apart must at once be plain; and yet by what seems a sweet inconsistency the men of the early Church dared to follow where they could not go alone, and by their very daring made discovery of His Humanity in Divinity—as we may discover His Divinity in Humanity, if we have a like valour of faith and life.

So it has been all down the ages. When St. Anthony read the text, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me," he took the words as a personal call, and acted on them without delay. We may think that he was in error in taking the command literally as a demand for the ascetic life which he followed, but who does not admire his high obedience, his splendid courage, his lofty ideal? When Bernard of Assisi desired to follow St. Francis, it was decided that they would consult the Bible for guidance, and it opened at this same text. Whereupon Francis said, "Behold the advice which Christ gives: go then and do what you have read"—for it was a doctrine with Francis that "we know as much as we do." And he went and did it. Who does not stand in awe of a fidelity which forsakes all that men seek and love and strive for at the bidding of a voice from the unseen! What right have we to say a word,

much less a word of criticism, in the presence of a courage so divine and an obedience so complete! Even in our age we have seen the lonely, troubled, pilgrim soul of Tolstoy walking, albeit with stumbling step, the same high hard way. How this question was answered by à Kempis in his golden little book of the Following of Christ, all the world knows. Listen:

“ ‘He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness,’ saith the Lord. These are words of Christ, whereby we are admonished how we must imitate His life and conversation if we would be truly enlightened and delivered from all blindness of heart. Let it, then, be our chief study to meditate on the life of Jesus. The teaching of Christ surpasseth all the teachings of the Saints; and he that hath His spirit will find therein a hidden manna. But it happeneth that many, from the frequent hearing of the gospel, feel little emotion; because they have not the spirit of Christ. What doth it profit thee to dispute deeply about the Trinity, if thou be wanting in humility? Sublime words make no man just and holy; but it is a virtuous life that maketh him dear to God. I would rather feel compunction than know how to define it. If thou didst know the whole Bible outwardly, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it profit thee without the love of God and His grace? ‘Vanity, all, all is vanity’; but to love



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God and serve Him alone, this is the highest wisdom. It is vanity to seek perishing riches and to trust in them. Vanity is it to wish for a long life and take but little pains about a good life. Study, therefore, to wean thy heart from love of visible things, and to betake thee to the things unseen."

Ay, there is truth told with the candour of utter simplicity in sincerity, as if we were stripped to the soul and He talking to us face to face. No wonder George Eliot wrote her lofty passage in praise of the "Imitation" which, as she tells us, works wonders to this day, turning bitter waters into sweetness, while expensive treaties, newly-issued, leave all things as they were before. Written down by a hand that waited for the promptings of the heart, it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, and triumph—not written on velvet cushions to teach endurance to those who are walking the hard way with bleeding feet. And so it remains a lasting record of human needs and consolations; the voice of a brother who, ages ago, felt, suffered, and renounced—in a cloister, it is true, with much chanting and long fasts—but under the same silent, far-off heavens, and with the same passionate strivings after righteousness, the same failures, and the same weariness.

Can we follow Jesus? The Church has

answered that question both No and Yes, and therein it is true to the profound paradox which lies at the heart of our religion. No one can read the New Testament without receiving the double impression that Jesus went where we cannot go, doing for us what we can never do for ourselves, and yet that we are none the less commanded to follow Him. How can such a thing be? No theory can explain how, but in the actual practice of salvation the riddle is solved and the whole truth made plain. Both statements are true, and they must be joined in our faith as they are held together in the gospel record. His life was unique, particular, ineffable, and He did what no one else can do, and yet He it is who commands us to follow Him—commands us, indeed, to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. By the same token, when either of these truths is taken by itself and pushed to the extreme, to the exclusion of the other, it becomes a peril, if not a plague.

Often enough the truth that Jesus is a Saviour has been taught in a way to lift from the hearts of men the pressure of those high demands which are the very essence of the moral life, turning liberty into licence. Just as certainly has the truth that Jesus is an example been set forth in a way to bewilder rather than to inspire. As well ask me to write the dramas of Shakespeare, or the dialogues of Plato! It is impossible. Nor is there

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much hope if we are left to follow a leader who is only one of ourselves, albeit purer, truer, nobler, but still only a poor peasant-Teacher, baffled as we are but braver of heart—a lone, heroic figure a little way ahead, walking a dim and shadowy path, guessing at the riddle of life as we have to do, knowing nothing certainly either of His destiny or ours. What we need, and what we have, is a revealer of the heart of things: a Leader who towers above us but is still close to us, His life entwined with ours, so that we somehow feel that what was true of Him is in some degree true, potentially, of ourselves. How these two things can be united may be hard to know, but they are equally vivid and equally blessed in the faith of the loftiest souls.

There is a sense in which it is deeply true that Jesus is not an example, but a Saviour. Examples alone do not save, not even the example of the Son of God. There must be some power to lift us to the height of what we know, some One to help us when we fall and heal us when we fail. Freed of its old, narrow interpretations, the truth here is that it is not the life of Jesus as a code of conduct that saves, but the God revealed in that life, its great assurance that He is love, its unveiling of the sources of spiritual power for man, as the mighty hope of the world. And this disclosure was possible because Jesus was not inherently unlike us, however far He rises above

us, else it were worse than meaningless to tell us to follow Him, much less that "He was tempted in all things like as we are." What is it to us that One of another order of being stood strong and square in the face of life and death? What is it to us that One essentially unlike us was true when derided, gentle under a crown of thorns, and faithful unto the Cross? What we need to know, if we are to be helped, is that we are the little brothers of One who did all that—little brothers of One who was sinless, not because He could not sin, but because He would not sin; the followers of One who became the Master by mastering life and death.

Altho' I know Thee as the Son of God,  
 Anointed;  
 And hail Thee Prophet, Priest, and King,  
 Appointed;  
 Still, when I need Thee, Thou art nearest,  
 And when I trust Thee, Thou art dearest,  
 As Son of Man.  
 And so I call Thee by the human name  
 I love,  
 The name that speaks most comfort  
 From above,  
 Redeemer, Counsellor, Immanuel—  
 As these I know Thee not so well  
 As Son of Man.

Not long ago a great teacher \* told us of the three stages of his growth in the knowledge and following of Jesus. As a young man he was an

\* Francis G. Peabody.

ardent rationalist, a lover of logic, eager for evidence, measuring Jesus by the tape line of his reason. It is often so with us when we are very young and know so much; for youth knows more than age, because it knows so many things that are not so. Gradually, with the deepening of life, through the appeal of beauty and the teaching of sorrow, he passed, imperceptibly, into the mystic way, drawn to that shining company by something hitherto unknown in his nature. From St. John to Tauler, from George Fox to Emerson and Martineau, he followed in their path, finding a new glory in the life of Jesus, and a new fellowship with the Eternal Christ. He learned that one may accept all the creeds, with their majestic propositions, and not be a Christian; without committing himself to honour or chastity or self-sacrifice. Indeed, one may believe in the resurrection of the body and yet be dead of soul, and never present his own body as a living sacrifice. For the creeds, as he discovered, are the records of the intellectual struggle of the centuries, not to create discipleship, but to interpret it.

Whatever the causes, by a process untraceable in the ripe years of age he finds the highest wisdom, the deepest delight, the sum of the duty and discipline of life, and the ideal of its dedication, all summed up in the words, "Follow Me." Ever the mystic quest goes on. Ever the reason toils to fathom and estimate the revelation of God in

Christ. But life has become simpler, more practical, more serene, at once easier and harder, more complex in its demands yet more compelling in its persuasions, at the bidding of the Master. He is amazed that any other test of fellowship should ever have been regarded as essential or sufficient. Here is a way of loyalty not dependent on orthodoxy, liberalism or mystical illumination, and open to the wise and simple alike—plain enough for the first steps of a little child, profound enough for the last reminiscences of old age. Once he thought that the varying interpretations of Jesus were like men ascending a hill from different sides, and destined to meet on the summit. Now he finds that he has walked a winding way, a spiral ascent, which has led him to different points of view, only higher up, with a broader prospect and a larger outlook—and ever a Friend is at his side.

Surely this is what it means to follow Jesus. It was the duty of Handel to write the "Messiah," because what a man should do comes out of what he is. No doubt Jesus would have written such a myriad-toned melody had He felt the call to do it. It was the duty of Wordsworth to brood among the lakes, interpreting God to man, even when multitudes were miserable in London. A man gifted for scientific research need not lay down his implements and go a-slumming in order to follow Jesus—unless he hears a call to do so. Science has its saints, and their service and sacrifice are

truly Christlike. Many kinds of life must be lived, and no one kind has a right to call itself alone Christian. To follow Jesus is to have the spirit of Jesus, to think about God and man and life as He thought, to do the duty appointed us in our lot as He would do it had He been sent to our task; to be ruled by His faith and spirit in all the experiences of life, its joys and sorrows, its disciplines and disasters, its dreams and disappointments.

Following Him day by day, content to trust His truth, and serve His will, not by laboured imitation, but as a natural fruit of His influence, we learn to know Him as One who walks with us to-day, as of old He walked with men in the days of His flesh. Time and distance vanish, and we are with Him, in the wonder and awe of His eternal life, because the God who lived in Him lives in us. Happily we are not commanded to understand Jesus, but to obey Him, and the measure of our obedience is the measure of our understanding. Nor do we have to think alike about Him in order to be comrades in the service of His spirit and the doing of His will. At the end, as at the beginning, the paradox remains by which we are bidden to trust Jesus as if we could do nothing ourselves and to obey Him as if He had only pointed the way. The secret lies in heartfelt loyalty to Him whose we are, and whom we follow, as Watson Gilder told us when he wrote:

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If Jesus Christ be man  
    (And only a man), I say  
That of all mankind I will cleave to Him,  
    And to Him I will cleave alway.  
If Jesus Christ be God  
    (And the only God), I swear  
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,  
    The earth, the sea, and the air.





## **THE HIDDEN LIFE**

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, whose law is the light of our feet, whose love is the glory of our lives, our hearts worship and bow down, awed by the mystery of Thy goodness, subdued by the wonder of prayer, exalted by Thy mercy. Truly Thou art our Father, and we would seek Thee in spirit and in truth, drawing near to Thee amid the shadows of life and death, that by the touch of Thy spirit we may be renewed in faith, purified in heart, and made strong for the duties that await us. We would hallow Thy name in thought and purpose and deed, in high ideals, pure motives, and heroic endeavours after righteousness, walking in the way of Thy wise and holy commandment.

Make us to know that every thought Thou hast toward us is a thought of mercy; that we live embosomed in Thy goodness and power; that every noble impulse of our being, every lofty aspiration has its source and solace in Thee. If any have come to this temple who have sought without finding, and have grown weary of the quest, may there be given to them the heart of a little child, pure and trustful; and as they grow still and gentle, let Thy nearness become real to them till Thy rest is their rest, Thy will their will, Thy joy their joy, which the world cannot take away. Lead us into the highlands of the mind, into the wide and quiet place of vision, where there is refuge and renewal of soul.

O light of God, that lighteth ever, man that cometh into the world, shine into our innermost soul, revealing the beauty of holiness, the sinfulness of sin, and the ineffable reality of Thy truth. Grant that the years may beget in us a quiet, deep, intelligent, ever-growing faith in Thee; and may that deepening assurance inspire us to noble living, taking away the sting of death and filling our hearts with the liberty of an eternal hope. Deliver us from evil, redeem us from fear, and atone us to Thyself in a deeper intimacy of fellowship and revelation.

Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; in the secret chamber of our souls make us to know the wisdom of love, the joy of purity, and the sweetness of Thy presence. Fill all Thy sanctuary this hour, and all Thy courts this day, that men of every race and every faith may rejoice in Thy truth and be renewed by Thy mercy. Give wings to our prayers that they may bring back the things we have need of, though we know not how to ask, save with a broken cry which Thou canst hear and understand. And may the grace of this hour hallow all the days of the week. In His name. Amen.

## VII

### THE HIDDEN LIFE

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."—*Colossians*  
3:3.

**T**HERE is an outer life of voice and presence, of vesture and deed, which men observe and judge. Back of that is an inner life of thought, motive, and feeling, always hidden, and often imperfectly expressed in our words and acts by which men know us. Further back still is an innermost life, the deepest of all, of which we ourselves are but dimly aware, save in so far as out of it grow thoughts and emotions and, at last, acts. There lie hidden not only our racial instincts and memories and the strivings and phantasies which took shape in old myth and folklore, but also the laboratory in which motives are made, with much else which leaps to light to startle and amaze. Let us study for a little that hidden inner life of the soul as it is related to spiritual faith and moral endeavour.

Much—very much—has been said in recent time about what Tennyson called the abysmal depths of personality: much that is wise, much that is unwise and unwarranted. Faddists have exploited it, bringing their facile over-belief to

play upon it, leaping from a few facts to huge conclusions, and making the basement of the mind a playhouse of novelty. Always it is so when a new advance is made in any field of exploration. Only a few years ago one would have thought that, instead of going into the upper room of the mind to find God, we must climb down into the crypt and peer into the shadows. Happily, the Comic Spirit was on guard against absurdity, and wrought its wholesome discipline while affording some of the richest satire of recent times. Nevertheless, when due allowance is made for extravagance, a vast mass of important fact remains, the discovery of which William James regarded as the chief advance made during his lifetime toward an understanding of life and a better use of the energies of man.

Now, my talk is not a lecture on psychology—heaven forbid!—much less an excursion into the recesses of psycho-analytic literature, following “the blazed trail” of Freud, James, or Jung. Not at all. Still, it is worth our while to look into the closet of our minds and see what is stored there, and to inquire as to how it may be best used in the making of character and the conduct of life. Such a study is rich in suggestions for the higher life of faith and service, for that it may reveal new points of strategic value in the moral struggle which is never adjourned. At least, the ancient command to “know thyself” has received

new and profound significance in the light of recent disclosures, and it behoves us to take account of the facts so far as they may be known, using every power of insight and discrimination at our command. Meanwhile, we may wisely avoid such a word as "subconscious," not only because it is ugly and clumsy, but because it may easily mislead us, since that inner chamber contains good as well as evil, or, rather, it contains neither the one nor the other, but the materials of both. For, in the last analysis, only the conscious personality is moral, and nothing is good except a good will.

For example, a singer learns a piece of music by reading the notes from a book. After a while he knows the tune from memory and sings it without a book, but he still sees in his mind the notes as they were on the page. Finally, he becomes so familiar with the music that he is not conscious of seeing the notes, either with his eye or his imagination. He sees nothing, but sings as a bird sings, without the aid of a score. Years pass, and the tune passes, or seems to pass, out of mind, and he cannot recall it. One day a wandering note strikes his ear, starts a train of memories, and the old song comes back to mind. It is the same with names. We try to recall a name, but cannot, and half an hour later it comes into mind, too late. It had been in the mind all the time, down in the storeroom, and it took it some time to climb up into the lighted room of memory. Such familiar

and simple facts give us hints of a dim, shadowy chamber within us, whereof we need to take note lest we overlook a secret which, if rightly used, may be to our profit.

Of course, these facts become more vivid and striking in abnormal states of mind, as when a servant girl in a hospital was heard speaking in an unknown tongue in her delirium. A Jewish rabbi, passing by, was astonished to hear a poor girl, not of his race, reciting passages from Isaiah and the Psalms in classic Hebrew. Investigation revealed that she had once been a servant in the house of a Hebrew scholar, whose custom it was to read Hebrew aloud while she was dusting his study. The words, passing thus into her mind, came out in her delirium, though she did not know what they meant. This is one of a thousand examples of how the mind, when stirred or strained, casts up things new and old, strange and often uncanny. Facts of this kind help us to explain many things, while giving us a glimpse of what may lie hidden away in the mind. Nothing is lost. Nothing is forgotten, though we may not be able to recall it at will. Truly, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and the hint here given may well be prophetic of what the judgment will be when what is hidden comes to light and the secrets of our hearts are made known.

In the first place, then, this inner chamber is the storeroom of the mind, the repository of all

that we have ever seen, thought, said, or done, and it would surprise us to see by a lighted candle all that it contains. There are stored all the automatic activities—the machinery, so to speak—by which the life of the body is carried on. We do many things “without thinking,” as we say, because we have done them so often and so long that they have become a part of our nature. If in getting up and sitting down we had to go through all the intricate process of thinking about it, we should hardly get anything else done—as a baby when he is learning to walk is kept busy at the task. There, too, are stored our hereditary tendencies, the pale immortality in us of those who went before; and, while we may be proud of our ancestors, often we could wish to have a reckoning with some of them for the traits which they very unkindly left with us. There also are to be found those relics of tiger and of ape, those uncivilised instincts which education has left behind, but not destroyed, and which come up betimes to vex us. There Mr. Hyde has his hidings. No man can keep evil thoughts from passing through his mind any more than he can prevent birds from flying over his head. Every man censors his thoughts, but those he casts aside remain in the mind, leaving their impress, like the footprints of monsters in the geologic rocks. Also, we have thoughts which we fear are too good to be true, too beautiful to tell, and these are still in our hearts, awaiting their rightful use.



Again, not only is that inner chamber a store-room, but it is also a workshop, none the less so because the work is done in the dark. Whether we know it or not, our minds are always astir, even in sleep—which explains, in large part, the wickedness of some of our dreams and the incredible beauty of others. For thought is a latent course of action, and our evil desires, our censored thoughts, take revenge upon us in our dreams, oftentimes. But that is not the whole story. In dreams a man loses his grip upon himself, and his noblest wishes bring beautiful visions when they are permitted to bear rule in the still house of sleep—like my dream, which recurs again and again, in which there is a temple built in the form of a cross, and the noblest intellects of the world are assembled to hear the Master preach as He preached on the mount; Socrates, Aurelius, Buddha, and Plutarch nodding assent and Amen to His words. No wonder Hamlet, when he considered what thoughts were in his mind, feared what dreams might come in the strange sleep which men call death.

Happily, it is not for us to settle the question, still in debate, as to whether anything enters the mind save through the front door of consciousness. Some think there is a back door, opening we know not whither, through which many things enter. But perhaps they are wrong. This does not mean that all that goes in at the front door is recognised

truly and fully. It may be recognised and misunderstood; things of moment may be taken for trifles, and trifles for things of large import. In the majority of cases the attention may be very slight, partial, fleeting. That is not the point. In some degree there is recognition, as by the same door there may enter a friend long looked for and loved and a boy bearing a package. For the one there is an eager welcome, for the other a passing glance. None the less, both pass through the same door. So no doubt it is at the front door of the mind, and we who are so careful and select as to who enters our homes should have a care what thoughts we allow to pass the front door of our minds.

No one need be told that much of our real life—more than we realise—lies in the reservoir of past thoughts, emotions, and acts. There lies the difference between a man whose knowledge consists in what he remembers and the man in whom learning has distilled that rare and fine essence we call culture. Here lies the difference between the speaker and the orator. No amount of elocution, no training of voice and gesture, can make an orator, albeit they may be an aid. The late Senator Hoar once told me that it was much harder for him to make a speech at seventy than when he was a young man at college. Nor is that strange. The thoughts of a man at seventy have sunk below the level of memory, and they are not always

easily recalled. Every time that great scholar spoke in his later years he came trembling before his audience. Yet, when the occasion came, when all eyes were fixed upon him, he was able to woo from the crypts of memory the best thoughts of his life. When deeply stirred he was, indeed, a noble orator, as on that memorable Lincoln Day in Boston, when he took for his text the words of Burke: "A state is a contract in which three parties are involved: the dead, the living, and those yet unborn." On the great battlefields of Flanders the English armies are keeping their contract with Wellington and the great soldiers of the past; on every sea the English navy is keeping its contract with Nelson and the great heroes of the past; and all together are keeping faith with those yet unborn, with the future, that it may be free, that righteousness may reign.

Not what we imagine we are, still less what we pretend to be, but what we really are in the depth of our nature, finds its way into our acts. Two boys were going up the stairs of a Cincinnati factory. There was a pail of naphtha on the landing, into which one boy threw a lighted cigarette, thinking it water. There was a flash of upleaping flame. One boy darted downstairs into the street; the other ran up the stairs to warn the girls working above that they might escape. Neither boy had time to ponder. Each acted instantly, instinctively. One was a coward in his deepest nature,

the other a hero, and neither of them knew it. So long as we have to stop to think in order to do right we are not safe. That man is saved who does right without having to stop to think, instantly at the moment, on the spur of the impulse. Evil has no chance to parley or delay. The decision is made and the thing done, or set for the doing, at once and outright.

Once more, while the machinery of our nature is below deck, like the engines of an ocean liner, the captain is above deck and must be at his post, or the ship will come to grief. We have the power—and, therefore, the right and duty—to sail our ship what way we will. The secret of it all lies in the ideas we select to have rule over our minds and control our lives; lies in what may be called the intent involved in attention. It was the thesis of George Eliot in "Romola" that sin consists, primarily, not so much in the motive as in the making of the motive; that is, in the will as applied to the choice of ideas that shall frequent the mental life, and, by playing round it and through it, make it after their own fashion. This thesis she works out with rare insight and impressiveness; but she never leaves us in doubt as to Tito Melema's deliberate choice of the ideas that poisoned his soul and wrought his ruin. The web of woe may have been woven in the dark inner chamber of his soul, but he initiated it and furnished the pattern. For an idea, an ideal, noble or ignoble, when given the

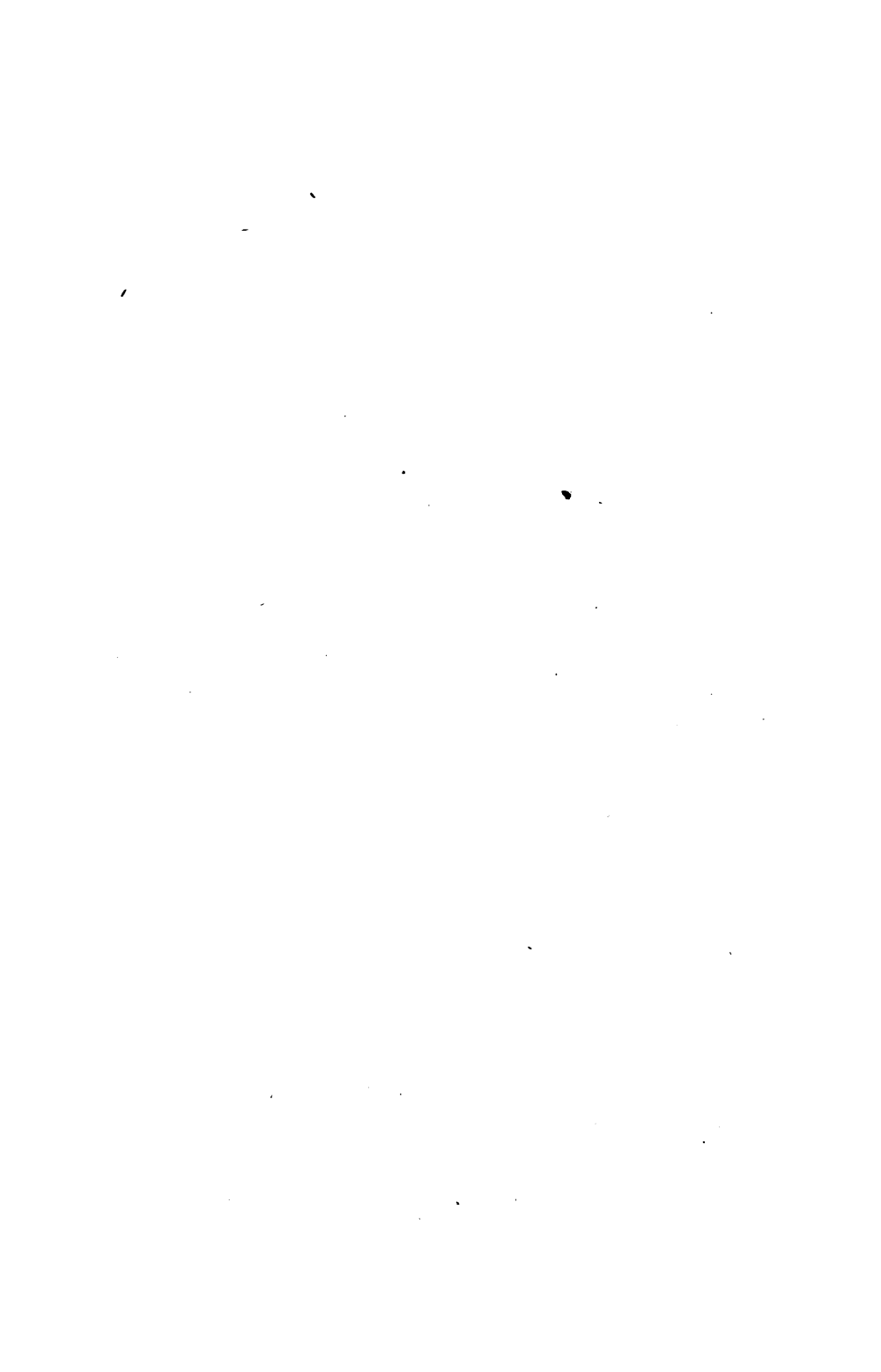
power to do so, organises the inner life, unifies it, and gives it direction and purpose, bringing all that is within us to its service, and at last transmutes what is averse to it into its likeness.

Here lies the profound meaning of the tragedy of "Macbeth." There we are shown, as if their bosoms were made of glass, how Macbeth and his lady held an evil idea in their minds, let it grow and gather power, until it slowly blinded them to all else, blurring moral insight and deadening humane feeling, until it changed a noble man and a gentle woman into fiends! In the same way Francis of Assisi lived a life of prayer until his life became a prayer. By the same law Phillips Brooks followed Jesus until his nature came to wear the very aspect of his Master, as Saint-Gaudens has shown us in his memorial. If evil ideals preside over the tragical procession of human vice, that fact only serves to emphasise the power over man of great and valid ideas. Noble truths, when sincerely and habitually held in the mind, find their way into our deepest life, shape it, rule it, and redeem it. Here is the strategic position in the moral and spiritual life. There is no evil we cannot overcome, no crisis we cannot face, if the mind be thus armoured and the heart ruled by just, sane, and lofty truths.

How wonderful the text becomes when read in this light! It tells of a hidden life—a life hid with Christ in God—a captain of the soul, who,

when the door is opened and He is allowed to enter and have sway over us, purifies, sweetens, and transfigures the heights and depths of our nature. By and through a spiritual life so down-reaching that it fathomed his innermost being, St. Paul enthroned Christ as the Lord of his life. Christ in us the hope of glory—in the uttermost depths of us—that was his vision and his dream, and by setting his heart upon it his ideal was fulfilled, until he could say, "For me to live is Christ!" Thus his deepest life laid hold of Christ, and Christ laid hold of it, unified it, ruled it, and glorified it. What man ever lived a more tempestuous life than St. Paul? Yet he went through a stormy age, amid perils by land and sea, bearing in his heart a sweet serenity. What wonder that he fought a good fight and kept the faith!

Such a life is for each of us, if we give ourselves to it and think it not too high for us to attain by the grace of Him whose we are. Every year should widen the area of conscious activity and power, until by a depth and richness of soul we attain to that God-consciousness in which faith becomes a fellowship, ineffable and redeeming. Even the sorrows of life should bring hidden beauties to light, as the spires of the sunken city of Is were said to show themselves when storms tossed the sea that covered them. Nor time nor death can mar the peace of a soul whose life is hid with Christ in God.



## **THE HOME OF THE SOUL**



Infinite Father, who art the fountain of life, the source of all that we are or hope to be, hallow our hearts with Thy presence, that we may truly hallow Thy name in our morning worship. Time is a shadow, life is but a span; O increase our faith in the divinity of the soul, lest the fleetingness of mortal life dismay us, and the flood of years sweep us away. Let Thy beauty be upon us, even as the colour in the flower; lift us above the shadow of time and death, that we may know that Thou livest in us and that our life hath eternity in Thy life.

Thou great Companion of our souls, make Thyself known to us, redeeming us from the hauntings of the grave, to which all things human decline, and teaching us to see the eternal in the temporal, that we may learn to read the meaning of the fleeting in the light of the abiding. Make us wholly Thine in thought and word and deed, in the atmosphere and activity of our lives, that Thou mayest be wholly ours; Thy power flowing round our weakness, round our restlessness Thy peace. Sanctify to us our daily life, with its burdens, its temptations, its tragedies, its bitter sorrows, that the spiritual may grow up slowly through the common, and some loveliness of spirit bloom in us amid the harsh facts of the world.

Thou who bringest light out of darkness and good out of evil in the eternal ritual of Thy will, help us to bring forth in our lives the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and the faith that makes us faithful. Bestow upon us Thy last and greatest blessing, that we, living in Thee, may be like Him in whose life of beauty and pity Thou hast shown us how to live, how to love, how to serve Thee and our fellow spirits. Let it be so, else our life will ebb out its little day ere we have lived at all, because we have not learned to know Thee and to make our home in Thy mighty Father-heart, where there is shelter for all.

Lord of heaven and earth, who hearest the sigh of a contrite heart before it is uttered, so cleanse us that we may come into closer fellowship with Thee and with one another. Fulfil in us those dreams of purity and of love that haunt us, and more and more fill us with the glad assurance of eternal life, that the number of our days may be the measure of our growth in wisdom of heart. Let it be unto Thy servants according to Thy will; and unto Thee, the Beginning and the End, the Lord of the living and refuge of the dying, be praise and glory for ever and ever. In His name. Amen.

## VIII

### THE HOME OF THE SOUL

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."—*Psalms* 90: 1.

**T**HE sad and stately music of this great Psalm, singing of the mortality of man in immortal words, befits the great chant of the human race. How thin and unreal, beside its restrained emotion and majestic simplicity, do even the most deeply felt strains of other poets sound! Like the God of whom it sings, it has been, for ages uncounted, an asylum of pilgrim souls in this twilight world. As one of your own preachers has said,\* one whose name was like music to me in my boyhood, like as an old "ancestral home shelters generation after generation of a family, and in its solid strength stands unmoved, while one after another of its sometime tenants is borne forth to the grave, and the descendants sit in the halls where for centuries before their ancestors sat," so God is the home of all who find any real home amidst the fluctuating shadows of time.

Hebrew tradition describes this Psalm as the prayer of Moses, the man of God. Its author, whoever he may have been, must have been a man

\* Alexander MacLaren, "The Psalms."

grown grey with a vast experience. He was standing on the edge of eternity, and His words, like the solemn notes of the voice of nature, have power to make "these noisy years seem moments in the being of the eternal Silence." Touched by the twilights of time, he meditates and prays. It is lofty poetry, but pensive, even mournful, attuned to the still sad music of mortality—as of the autumnal glory of a great leafy wood when the leaves are falling and the birds are going South. Near by there is the sound of perishing, of slow decay, of the swift funeral of morning flowers, and the hush of profound sleep. In the distance is the silent but all-devouring rush of floods, invisible, irresistible, overwhelming.

And where is Man, pursued of Time and overtaken by Death? At first he seems utterly lost—the child of a day, whose life, even at its longest, is as a watch in the night, as the grass that flourishes in the morning and withers at eventime; so quickly is he cut down. There is the swift passing of Time, the numbering of our days, the story of our brief leasehold of threescore years and ten, full of labour and sorrow—the tragedy of man defeated by the seasons, losing heart, wearing his soul out in wistful vigil. But that is not the conclusion of the whole matter, nor is man utterly cast down. The wise old Bible does not close even its grand funeral hymn on a note so unutterably sad and haunting. It tells us the simple

truth, makes us pause and take breath and ponder, the while we look before and after, brooding over things passed and dreaming over things to come; but it does not leave us hopeless.

Never, thank God; and in the last lines of this chant we hear the faint note of victory, like the tender, timid bird song in the funeral music of Chopin—a bow of hope, flung across our dim sky, arching over our fugitive years and fleeting joys. Frail we are and vanishing, here to-day and to-morrow gone, but we are not the companions of the perishing flowers; we are the heirs of a divine beauty that fadeth not away. “As upon the delicate petal of the lily, God imprints His thought of whiteness, as upon the still frailer haze of drifting cloud He paints His bow of promise,” so upon the soul of man, whose life is like a vapour, whose day is a span, He imprints His image and the glow of His eternal beauty. The glory of man, his dignity in life and his hope in the dark night of death, is in the prayer, “Let the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.” It is by living a noble life that man passes out of the realm of things that fade; by fellowship with things that are eternal that he is made master of the chances and changes of the years—set free from the tyranny of Time and the terror of the Tomb. Here lies the path to citizenship in that tranquil country where the sting of mortality cannot hurt, and where a thousand years are as a day.

There are times, as we all know, when the universe is our home, and other times when we are homeless in it—exiles amid familiar scenes, smitten with world-strangeness, forlorn, and lonely. This change from one mood to another may happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Often we are homeless in the midst of friends, and again we are at home in the infinity of the wilderness or on the wide and wandering sea whose waters drift and sing. Art, philosophy, religion, are so many efforts of man to make the universe homelike, or rather to make our minds at home in the universe. Below all other desires, if he will search his heart, man finds the wistful longing to exchange the precarious finite home for one secure and infinite; for, if his home is in eternity, it cannot be left or destroyed. Nor is it altogether a matter of mood, like the shifting of light and shadow; but we ourselves, as all our teachers tell us, can make a home of the universe, or be homeless in it, according to our way of thinking and acting, and, above all, by the wisdom and power of faith. Why does the House of Life seem suddenly shattered by the tragedy of world-war, leaving us shivering and shelterless? No one has given a truer answer than the literary editor of the *Times*:

“ We have lost our citizenship in the City of God because we have lost our sense of common human-

ity. We feel ourselves to be citizens of the same City of God with the old Germans, with the music-makers and seekers of wisdom, and the universe is not homeless when we think of them. Each nation recognises its kinship with the past of the other; will it not also hope for a kinship in the future? Either we are all citizens of the same City of God, and war between us is Civil War, a monstrous iniquity to be forgotten as soon as it may bring peace, or else there is no City of God and no home for man in the universe, but only an everlasting conflict between creatures that have nothing in common and no place where they can gather and be at rest."

Aye, it is true, terribly true; no far-shining city of God, but only the clash of blind forces, and all doomed to be crushed together in the end. Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but man has not where to lay his head in peace until he has learned to live in peace with his fellow-man. It is injustice, cruelty, brutality, and the inhumanity of man to man that makes us homeless wanderers in the world! When men turn the gracious earth into a wild hell of savage slaughter, it is no wonder that heaven seems remote and unreal, and the beat of the mighty Father-heart is faint and far off. Even our own home seems almost alien, and familiar scenes are strange, when such things are done under the sun. Not only

war, but our social injustice, our economic brutality, makes us pilgrims without shelter, and the faith of many is crushed in the budding. Oh, when will man learn that he cannot know God, cannot be at home in this universe, until he learns to be just to his fellow-man, generous and brotherly and neighbourly? It is only when we do justly, and love mercy, that we can walk with God, and know that He walks with us, making the world a home.

Dante Rossetti has a sonnet sequence entitled "The House of Life," wherein he sings in soft, silvery notes of youth and change, of love and fate. It is beautiful—

A moment's monument,  
Memorial from the Soul's eternity  
To one dead deathless hour . . .

but the real House of Life, the Home of the Soul, is in God who is from everlasting to everlasting. He has been our dwelling-place in all generations, our help in ages past, our hope in times to come, and to know God is to be at home. From Him we come forth in the morning, in Him we live and move and have our being, and to Him we return at eventide—"when that which drew from out the boundless deep, turns again home." In Newman's noble poem, "The Dream of Gerontius," the souls in pain are heard singing this great Psalm. Even so we may chant it, humbly confid-

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ing in the Ancient of Days who will redeem us alike from vain forebodings and from futile regrets.

Such a faith teaches us to so number our days that we may not merely count up and spell out their syllables, but attain to the wisdom of love and the patience of hope. One may so follow this faith in his heart until he begins to regard all life, as the wise men say, in the light and aspect of eternity. This mighty truth, profounder than our thought, grander than our vision, we must take to heart, my dear friends, when so many dwelling-places of mankind—his philosophies, his theologies—have been torn as by a mighty storm. Here is the secret, as Eckhart, the mystic, learned it long ago, of being younger to-morrow than we are to-day—that is, one step nearer the source from whence we came. So learning, man may master his fitful, fretful life by means of tranquillity and joy, living in quietness and confidence. And yet nothing is more pathetic than our human life. Truly did “John Inglesant” say that only the infinite pity of God is equal to the infinite pathos of human life. Nearly all who take large and long views of the life of man and his slow, stumbling march, are touched with a certain subdued sadness. We see it in the philosophic pity of Aurelius, and in the profound compassion of Jesus. No great and tender soul is free from it, and sometimes it deepens into a bitter, poignant



melancholy, as in these words whose author you would hardly guess:

“A myriad men are born; they labour and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little, mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; shames and humiliations bring down their pride and their vanities; those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, misery grows heavier year by year; at length ambition is dead, pride is dead, vanity is dead, and longing for relief is in their place. It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from the world, where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness—a world which will lament them for a day and then forget them forever. Then another myriad takes their place, and copies all they did, and goes along the same profitless road, and vanishes as they vanished, to make room for another, and another, and a million other myriads, to follow the same arid path through the same desert, and accomplish what the first myriad, and all other myriads that came after it, accomplished—nothing!”

Unless you had met those words you would hardly expect to find them in the Autobiography of Mark Twain. Upon all men, even upon the

prophet of the religion of laughter, there falls, at times, a withering sense of the vanity of life, of the futility of mortal aspirations, faiths, and hopes. Life seems a dead level of monotony. Man is seen performing the same antics in the same grave fashion as in all the past—making war as he did five thousand years ago; heaping up wealth which another will inherit; following pleasures which turn to dust, or fire, on his lips; thinking, as always, that he will endure forever, and calling after his name the place that shall soon know him no more. It is a bleak and dreary mood, and one which makes the heart of even the strongest man old, forlorn, and sad. The answer to that bitter mood—that which takes the pain out of the pathos of life, leaving only a tender pensiveness—is the faith of this stately Psalm. All the journeying generations, all the swarming myriads who pass like falling leaves, live in God, who is the Home of the Soul, even as He lives in them.

No soul is outside of God. The dead of ages past, our own dear, pitiful dead—"all the dead, small and great," as the seer of Patmos saw them in his vast and tender vision—have their life and hope in Him. Not one is forgotten, not even the little babe that died in India five thousand years ago, nor that little sleeper, buried from an emigrant wagon, whose tiny grave George Prentice found as he sat down to rest in a lonely forest. He was a poet and saw the whole scene once more

—the father digging the grave with his own hand, and the mother waiting with the babe in her arms. He saw them lay it away, and drive on, and on, and on, looking wistfully back. But a greater Poet than he looked upon that scene, even He who watches the fall of a sparrow, and He remembers that little one. And not only one, but all—those torn by wild beasts in the dawn of time, those who fell on red fields of war, those smitten by plagues, those who died in the filth of the slums—all are in the Home of the Soul, they live in Him. It is this grand Christian faith, turned into a telescope of revelation and prophecy, that gives to the universe the sweetness of a home, and the warmth of a fire-side—"In my Father's house there are many rooms."

Happily in our own time we have been taught that God lives in man. It is a great, a precious truth, revealing the greatness of the soul, explaining its hunger for the Infinite, and making authentic its instincts and intuitions. It shows that our highest thoughts are not like Whitman's "noiseless spider" spinning threads and throwing them out into the infinite in the hope that they may catch somebody, but that they are dictated by the spirit of God within us. But we need now to learn—oh, we need so much to learn, my friends,—that not only does God live in us, but that we live in Him, insphered in His life and love and power and goodness. Manifestly the matter with the Church of our

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day is that it has lost its faith; it speaks in faltering words, trembling, hesitant tones, therefore it has no response, or very little. That God is our dwelling-place is the deep, unconfessed, unformulated faith of humanity. Without it man could hardly live, or, living, he would only weep. When this truth stands fully revealed the words of Hinton have a new meaning: "We are near home; may we be homelike!" Indeed, yes, if we open our hearts to know Him "in whom we live and move and have our being," as a bird trusts itself to the soft air in which it flies. Santa Teresa had her House of Life, an upper room, a place of prayer, where for eighteen years she was wont to go to learn the finest of all arts, the art of prayer; and there she had the joy of home "as the great angels have it, untold and hidden." And she left a book I am almost afraid to read; it has in it things so deep and so wonderful. When I read it I realise that we ministers, and you in the pews, are alike just beginning to learn the alphabet of the truth of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Each of us may know the joy of the old man in the Faber poem, of whom the poet said:

Always his downcast eye  
Was laughing silently,  
As if he found some jubilee in thinking;  
For his one thought was God,  
In that one thought he abode,  
Forever in that thought more deeply sinking.

Once an old peasant fell asleep and dreamed at the close of the day. In his dream he saw his tiny hut expand into a vast temple, more beautiful than any he had ever seen. The dingy rafters were lifted up and became dim and lofty arches, like those arches in the Abbey that quite overcome me and make me want to sit down and cry like a child. The dirty windows became rich, stately, and multi-coloured, showing the faces of the Master and His followers. The hearth became an altar, its flickering fire a sacred flame; his children, living and dead, were priests performing holy rites, and the wind sweeping round the corner became as the music of a great organ. It was a dream of faith, of the Home of the Soul that overarches all our little creeds and all our little churches. There shall come a time when man shall awake from his lofty dreams and find his dream still there, that his dream is true, "and that nothing has gone but his sleep."

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

## **THE ETERNAL TENTS**

O Lord, our Father and Redeemer, who art above, beneath, around, and within us, make us truly responsive to Thy presence in this hour of prayer, that we may worship Thee with pure hearts, with honest minds, with noble purpose, with generous deeds. Thou hast spoken to men of every age by the lips of prophets out of the great book of truth, but most clearly to us in the life of Jesus, telling the story of Thy love and the wonder of Thy mercy; give us eager ears, sensitive hearts, and open minds, that we may listen and obey. Not for things do we pray, but for those gifts of the Spirit which make for righteousness of life and beauty of character, that we may be indeed members of Thy kingdom and servants of Thy truth.

Thy kingdom ruleth over all, Thy will is inevitable, Thy law is eternal, changeless, and benign, in the keeping of which lies our peace and our hope. Renew within us a sense of Thine awful and gracious sovereignty, not as an arbitrary power, but as the loving wisdom and gentle might of our Father, in whose great hand we stand; that we may walk reverently, live confidently, and toil faithfully all our days. Forgive our sins, forgive our fears; fortify our souls in this wild and desperate age; and let us know that Thou art the Commander of these times, working out Thine eternal will.

Infinite Goodness, whose light shines in all the shapes which beauty takes, shine within us, revealing Thy nearness; for we need Thee every passing hour. All of us are alike in our kinship with Thee, all alike in our dependence upon Thee, yet each has a life of his own and a work to do which no one else can do. Help us to find our place in Thy great plan of redemption and do our work earnestly, patiently, quietly, loyally, that we may be prepared by the discipline of life for Thy higher service above.

Pilgrims we are, dwellers in tents, here to-day and to-morrow gone; teach us, Lord, how to build a temple that endures for the habitation and comfort of the soul. Help us, through the indwelling of Thy spirit, to become familiar with the ways of Thy household, and grant us a finer skill in the art of brotherly living. May Thy loving-kindness and tender mercy be upon us, and upon all whom our hearts remember in this hour of intercession. In His name. Amen.

## IX

### THE ETERNAL TENTS

"That they may receive you into the eternal tents."—*Luke 16:9.*

**T**IME out of mind the parable of the Unjust Steward has been a stumbling-block and a puzzle, if not an offence to many readers. It actually seems, at first sight, that the Master had put a premium on dishonesty, as if he had held up for our imitation the clever trick of an unscrupulous rascal. But that is because so few know how to read a parable. No parable is meant to go on all fours, and a four-footed mind cannot read one aright. Nearly every parable has a single point which it seeks to illustrate and expound, and if we try to find an exact counterpart for each of its details the result is confusion. So it is with the parable of the Unjust Steward, which was manifestly told in a humorous mood, and must be read in the light of a smile between the lines; and it must have been a sweet smile.

The agent of a certain rich man, having been found out as a rogue, was about to be discharged. At once he began to pity himself, not because he was a thief, but because he had been caught. He feels that he is too frail to dig, and



too proud to beg, albeit he had not been too proud to steal. And so he decided to use the brief term of his office yet remaining to make for himself a soft place to fall when he was thrown out of his position. Accordingly he called the debtors of his chief one after another and "wrote off" a percentage of their indebtedness, at the same time giving each a receipt in full—thereby making them, in so far, his debtors. His master learned of his scheme, and, while fully conscious of its dishonesty, was amused by it. All men admire cleverness, and the master commended the steward, not because he was unjust, but because of his shrewdness in using present advantage to make provision for the future.

Hence the strange saying of Jesus, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into the eternal tents." That is to say, Be as alert, as thrifty, as canny in the service of righteousness as men are in seeking their lower and unjust ends. It is a plea for practical acumen on the higher levels of moral effort, emphasising the importance of replacing futile and sentimental methods with moral sagacity and consecrated common sense. It is not the motive of worldly men that He approves, but their method, their strategy, their industry, their persistence, their wit in facing realities. He would consecrate sagacity, bringing the same absorbed attention, the same discipline,

the same shrewdness, which men use to win the prizes that perish, to the service of the life of the spirit. He urged that men should be as eager and insistent in behalf of eternal things as they are in the quest of earthly things—what Wordsworth called “the mystical side of good sense.”

What He meant is best shown us in His own life. No one ever more completely divorced piety and stupidity, alike in His teaching and in the method of His labour. What richness of resource, what noble cunning in making lofty truth simple, what wise adaptability, what sweet strategy in winning the souls of men! Surely, if we may judge by His example, there is no reason why a sermon should be prosy or dull. Having the greatest of all stories to tell, He made use of every art at hand, employing the world as an infinite parable to illustrate His gospel. Birds, flowers, the habits of the home and field, the weather, the games of boys and girls—with exquisite ingenuity He brought the simplest things to the service of the highest truth. He held that the sons of light must be wiser as well as nobler than the sons of darkness, if they would gain their ends. They must not only be courageous, but shrewd, and, above all, persistent, not content with ill-advised, timid, and intermittent efforts. There is hardly any lesson we need more to learn to-day, if we would be followers of One who was a great artist and a wise fisher of men.

Worldly wisdom, of course, is not the highest wisdom, but its maxims have their uses none the less and may be applied as far as they go. Pascal was "an abject believer," it has been said, but he it was who wrote the famous Wager Essay, in which he urged men beset by intellectual difficulties to wager that God is, stake all their eternal interests upon it, and make trial of the highest life. That is not putting it on a very high plane, but the man who would go upstairs must take the first step as well as the last. Indeed, the best teachers of worldly wisdom are the great unworldly minds, as one might cull from the pages of Emerson a little book of practical truth which any man of affairs would like to carry in his pocket. I am reminded that the first minister of the City Temple issued a book of business maxims. The Bible is no stranger to the religious value of worldly wisdom, as witness its Wisdom Literature. But it sets the maxims of worldly wisdom within the glow of a grand idealism, using the lessons learned from the years now as teachers, now as symbols, of eternal truth, and as methods whereby we may attain to do it. And when wisdom fails, faith finds wings to fly above and beyond it.

The history of America furnishes an example, in the life of Lincoln, of one who was as wise as a serpent and as gentle as a dove. As Everett said, his shrewdness amounted to inspiration. He was

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an expert politician, trained in the school of experience which sharpened his wits, and taught him how to move men, how to lead them, how to know them; and without that training he would have been as helpless as a child in the wild and fateful hour when he was made the leader of a torn and turbulent nation. But let it be forever remembered that he did not use his skill for his own ends, but always for the sanctity and safety of his Republic, dedicating his sagacity to a high moral ideal. That is the difference between the politician and the statesman. Never, my dear friends of England, did England and America need more than now men of the type of Lincoln, with practical sagacity, and devoting that sagacity to high ends. Writing in 1809, Coleridge declared in words that might have been written yesterday, that the maxims of genuine expedience are little regarded by the very people who profess to obey nothing higher than expedience.

“So much so,” he added, “that I dare hazard the assertion that in the whole chapter of contents of European ruin, every article might be unanswerably deduced from the neglect of some maxim that had been repeatedly laid down, and enforced with a host of illustrations in some one or other of the works of Machiavelli, Bacon, or Harrington. It would be a melancholy but very profitable employment for some vigorous mind, intimately acquainted with the recent history of,

Europe, to collect the weightiest maxims of Machiavelli alone and illustrate by appropriate facts the breach of observation of each, to render less mysterious the present triumph of lawless violence. The apt motto for such a work would be, 'The children of darkness are wiser in their generation than the children of light.'"

Indeed, one is tempted to say that the same text might also serve as a motto for a commentary on the present state of the religious world, when the Church seems more like the Widow of Christ than His Bride. Divided into parties, and subdivided into sects,—some of them small enough to be called insects—our churches furnish a melancholy example of the lack of common sense. So far as our differences are real and fundamental they must and should exist, each party having due regard for the service of the other, nor forgetting that charity without which the most perfect creed is nothing. But when they are only reminiscences of old debates long since dead, and persist by virtue of sectarian prejudice or pride, they can show no reason for being; the less so when the things which we have in common are not only more profound, but more precious, than the things which divide. Such a dissipation of effort must excite the pity of practical men of the world, from whom the Church may take lessons in wisdom, as the Master urged, without aping their tactics or adopting their methods. But

it need go no further than to its own great leaders in the past, who united spiritual insight with the sagacity which brings things to pass. St. Paul had in rare degree the three qualities which Emerson said attract the reverence of mankind—disinterestedness, practical power, and courage. After reading the "Journal of Wesley," one feels that the evangelist, were he alive, could direct the fortunes of a great business enterprise with ease. What we need to-day is a large, clear-seeing, statesmanlike acumen, touched with the light of a heavenly vision, and brought to the service of the Church in its effort to win men to the fellowship of the life of the Spirit.

Howbeit, my real theme has to do, not with the higher uses of worldly acumen, but with that haunting phrase used by the Master, found nowhere else in the Bible, "the eternal tents." No doubt it was an echo in His heart of the days far gone when the people of His fathers were wanderers in the wilderness, and their white tents dotted the desert. Pilgrims, following a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, they looked forward to a land of promise, and to a city that hath foundations. And when, after weary years, they at last reached the land of their dreams, built them cities and temples and uplifted a noble civilisation, the memory of those days haunted all their history. Their desert journey became, in the minds of their poets and prophets, a symbol of

the pilgrimage of humanity in the world, of the fleetingness of mortal things. Never for a day were they allowed to forget that, however stately and imposing their dwellings, they were yet pilgrims, having here no continuing city, but seekers still after a more abiding habitation beyond time and the scenes of earth. Even so it is with the vast encampment of humanity. Tentmakers, all of us, like the people which were of old, we are also pilgrims. Working with materials that perish and pass away, and with hands soon to be folded in a long sleep, we build what is soon unbuilt and taken down. Our homes, our temples, our civilisations vanish. "Our little systems have their day and cease to be," melting into thin air, like the gorgeous and fantastic sky-tents which build and unbuild themselves in the summer sunlight. Where now are the great cities and civilisations of ancient Egypt and India? Where are the commanding theologies which of old were the dwelling-places of multitudes of noble and devout men? They were tents pitched in the morning, struck at eventide, sheltering men for a day, then moving off down the long, dim vistas toward the sunset and the night. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; whether there be tongues, they shall perish." Nothing abides. Here is the pathos of life, made doubly pathetic by those who seek to go back and dwell in the worn-out, tattered tents of long ago. Yet something sur-

vives amidst all vanishings—something that may be called an Eternal Tent.

The old home in which we grew up, mayhap a humble cottage with a great tree in the yard, and a tiny window from which we watched the sun rise over the hill, is gone—owned now by strangers, who call it their own. It was a tent pitched by loving hands in the midst of the years, hallowed by holy fellowships of joy and sorrow. What days were those that come not back! What laughter in festivals of joy, what bitter tears of funeral farewell! But it was only a tent. Those who dealt there are scattered near and far, some to homes of their own, some to walk alone in far places, and some have fallen asleep. Some have done well, some ill. Yet often, on the wings of memory from across the distances, they gather once more in the old home, and rest for a night. Its faith, its fellowship, its ties of love and joy and sorrow abide, weaving an Eternal Tent not made of hands. Out of the old home, around it, by the mercy of God in whose name it was built, there rises something that endures, something that time cannot take away nor death destroy.

In the same way, our temples are built of wood or stone, but they are hallowed by the hymns our fathers sung, and eloquent with the echoes of voices long hushed. Age lends them dignity. Time mellows their beams and arches, like an old violin which remembers the melodies of yester-



year. Associations ineffable make them houses of God and gates of heaven. Yet at best they are no more than tabernacles in a wilderness, destined to crumble at last to the dust to which all things decline. But the House of the Soul remains, the lives of the Saints endure, and the faith of our fathers changes its robes and marches on, leading their sons. The world can never be as if those spires had not pointed men Godward. They stand for nobility in the land, for order in the home, for purity in the secret places of the soul. Life in the street, in the places of labour and play, feels the impress of their beauty, and the influence of their sanctity and hope. The Hebrew temple vanished from the holy city ages ago, destroyed by ruthless hands, leaving only a heap of smoking ruins. But its altar fire still glows, and its sanctuary has been a sheltering roof of human souls through all the years—a white tent for a pilgrim host.

Our civilisation itself comes within the reach and scope and energy of this law of the permanent in the transient. "The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome" have faded. Their story is a tale told in the House of History. Yet Rome still lives in the majesty of her law and her genius for the organisation of civilisation. The Forum is now a mere expanse of utter wreck, where antiquarians dig for the vestiges of great events, but its eloquence is still heard. Greece is

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immortal in her art, her philosophy, her sense of form, her worship of reason, and her vision of the holiness of beauty. Adown the ages her great thinkers have pitched their Eternal Tents for the shelter of the human mind, and her dramatists still search our hearts with their profound tragedies. Nothing seems to abide. Yet nothing is really lost. When "the great globe, yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve" at last, as if God Himself were only a maker of tents, nothing will be lost. Round the earth, with its long story so strange and tragic, there has been woven an Eternal Tent which will abide forever.

Surely this is a truth to lay to heart when we are haunted by a sense of futility. No one knows what he does. No one needs to know. Our duty is to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain. We must do our work and pass on. Pilgrims we are, and the sand covers our tracks almost in the passing. If we pitch our tent at eventide, we must strike it in the morning and fare on our way. Love alone endures, and it will be well for us if, when we pass into the Unseen, we find those whom we have blessed here, waiting to bid us welcome "into the eternal tents." How far-echoing is this phrase as Jesus uses it in respect to the life hereafter. Like a true musician, "out of three sounds He frames not a fourth sound, but a star" to lead

us, teaching the "glory of going on and still to be."

Strangely enough, He did not say the Eternal City, as we would have expected Him to say in speaking of heaven. No, it is "the eternal tents," using the emblem of unsettlement and uncertainty as a symbol of the life beyond; uniting the two ideas of rest and progress. Now, take thought for a moment. Is it not true that rest without progress would be intolerable? It would not be rest at all, but idleness. How much better is the promise of rest without inactivity, progress without weariness! There will indeed be no more pain, but your yearning will not cease, nor your achievement. The truth of God is infinite, and eternity is too short for its full discovery. What a great expedition awaits each of us in that—not another life, but that continuation of this life, when we become dwellers with Him in the Eternal Tents.

## **THE RELIGION OF SHAKESPEARE**

Infinite Father, how quiet are Thy comings, how gentle Thy goings, how elusive Thy hallowing presence which falls over us betimes in holy moods, consecrating our hearts and adding a new glory to our lives. What wonder that in the stress and strain of our days, in the fret and jar of our cares, and even in intense longings and strivings of heart, we often pass Thee by and see not how near and blessed Thou art. Have mercy, Lord, upon our slowness of heart, and give us minds more responsive to the persuasions of Thy spirit, and ears to hear Thy footsteps by our side along our human way.

Behold us, gathered with hushed hearts in the hush of this Temple, awaiting the touch of Thy spirit upon our spirits, praying that as quietly as flowers grow, as silently as stars creep into the evening sky, so wilt Thou make Thyself known to us in all Thy graciousness and all Thy cleansing love. Present Thou art, else we could not live; but O make Thyself known to each soul in its need, that all may go hence renewed, fortified, and full of hope. Take away all mists from our eyes, and all malice from our hearts, that we may behold the wonder of Thy truth that makes us free and the glory of Thy grace that is more than life.

Thou knowest how long we have sought for Thee, and with what intense desire, and have found naught on earth that satisfied our need. Show us, to-night, whence cometh the aspiration to seek Thee; that it is because Thou didst first brood over our hearts, evoking in us a great need and a great hope. Forgive our sin that makes us blind, make holy our hearts by Thy mercy, that with the pure of spirit we may see the way of Thy will and walk in it faithfully and with gladness of heart, doing the duty that lies next to us, knowing that it is a path to power and a window of larger vision.

Reverently we thank Thee for those shining spirits who, having conquered where we failed, return to us laden with light and joy and beauty, lifting us out of the mire and the clay and setting our feet upon the rock. They have caught strains of unheard music wherewith to exalt us above the dim vale of doubt into the sunny air of faith, putting a new and sweeter song into our heart. Let it be that, as they have helped us in our struggle, so we may be of aid to others, leading them to a deeper faith, a clearer insight, and a wiser hope. And this we ask in the name of Him in whom we know Thee as our Father, to whom be the praise of hearts made happy by His grace. In His name, Amen.

## X

### THE RELIGION OF SHAKESPEARE \*

"As certain also of your own poets have said."—  
*Acts 17: 28.*

**S**HAKESPEARE! What far-reaching melodies that name evokes, what visions of beauty and of power, of prodigal splendour of genius, it conjures up! To read him is like dipping into the Fountain of Youth and rising new-born, with the flutter of happy wings in our hearts. How rich and spacious he is, how large and free of utterance, how elemental, yet how elfin withal, the spirit of him. He had such joy in life, despite its tragedy, such abundance of fancy flowering into poetry and into deeds heroic even in their folly. What if we cannot tell anything new about Shakespeare, he is new with a never-aging youth, and in company with him we can hear the murmur of the sea and look up at the stars.

How well some of us remember when first we listened to his lyric, rhythmic lines, read by a sweet voice now hushed, and what vistas opened before us! Riper years, bringing a less rosy outlook, have only deepened the wonder of the crags and

\* A sermon preached by request, as appropriate to the Shakespeare celebrations which, despite the war, began in July and continued into August.

valleys, the lights and shadows of that marvellous eloquence. To-day we try to think of Shakespeare and we can think only of life and death and the soul. Merely to recite to ourselves the names of his plays, to call the roll of our favourite characters, to let the music and the picture of the verse steal over our minds, is like holding up jewel after jewel from an Oriental casket and watching the flash and sparkle and play of colour. It is like walking in the garden of Alcinous, where apple falls on apple and blossom and fruit hang together on the tree.

Our thought of Shakespeare, as you need not be reminded, is a richly complex association. As in the great Raphael painting the cloud in the background, when we look closely, is seen to be made up of innumerable faces, so about Shakespeare are gathered a cloud of shining minds. He has, so to speak, robbed generation after generation of their store to add to his Treasury of Merit, and yet he gives more than he takes; a star, as Milton said, to whom other stars repair and fill their golden urns with light. Think of the critics who have come from the ends of the earth, bearing their gifts of praise to lay at his feet! Think of the artists whose embodiments of his scenes come to mind at the mention of his name! Think of the actors who have made their names immortal in his rôles, whose melody of voice, whose stateliness or charm of person, are blended with our

memory of the poetry itself! To think of Hamlet is to see once more the gracious figure of Edwin Booth, hear his rich tones, and feel his lonely sadness as of a dweller in a world all beautiful even in its sorrows. What a pageant of beauty, power, and genius, all radiant in one light, passes before us.

What days were those when we passed up the golden stairway into the great main entrance of the Shakespeare theatre, led by our honoured and dear teachers. We were instructed in the principal plays by Charles and Mary Lamb, those first kind porters of the House Beautiful, who told us the tragic tales in perfect English. Then we were ready to listen to Jameson, Lady Martin, Coleridge, Hazlitt, or to such foreign writers as were used in schools. Perhaps at twenty we felt that we knew Shakespeare, but the years have taught us that we may never live to measure the height and depth of that vast genius. One turns it about and turns it about, said sweet Mary Coleridge, and it is all there; everything in Shakespeare except the Bible. Of course that is an exaggeration, but it is true that he is lord of more realms than any other poet. Supreme religious experience is almost the only domain where his genius is not assured, and he wanders around that realm in constant wonder, and, toward the end, in "The Tempest," he almost seems to have entered it.

Always a great poet speaks first to his own time,



and if his voice be deep and true enough, he speaks through his age to the times following. Ben Jonson was right when he said that Shakespeare was "not of an age, but for all ages"; but those words may easily make us forget that other line in the same poem which tells us that he was "the soul of the age" in which he lived. Back of the moving shapes and light and colour of his stage lay the England of Queen Elizabeth, an age of lengthening vistas and lifting skies in which he grew to full stature and wrought his wonders; in which he became not only rich and wise, but famous and happy. If he expressed the soul of England, as Homer did of Greece, and Dante of Italy, it was because he was so deeply rooted in the soil of his age and land. He was the better spirit of his day, and of all days, a great, gentle, wise, rejoicing soul who towers above his time; and because life and love and death were then what they are now, and will be "to-morrow, to-morrow, and to-morrow," he has somewhat to say to every time.

Time out of mind it has been the fashion to say—loosely, to be sure, but with no end of iteration—that we know nothing of the man Shakespeare. That is absurd. Of few men is there a clearer picture in the popular mind, so much so that all men feel that they know him, almost as if they had seen him, and that he is a friend. True, Shakespeare kept no diary like Pepys, wrote no Confessions like Augustine, and no Boswell fol-

lowed at his heels; but he is better known than other great men of his time—except men of state and members of the nobility. As a matter of fact, we know much more about him than we know about Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle, and quite as much as we know about Dante. We know how he wrote—swiftly and without erasure, as Jonson tells us—we know what he wrote, and we know that he wrote it. As to his personal relationships, all agree to call him “gentle,” and had he not been so natural, so real and simple and withal so gentle in his life, we should know much more about him. Besides, his spirit, his quality of thought, his attitude toward life and its mysteries, lie broad and grand upon his pages, all the more engaging because so unconsciously revealed. As Emerson said, while we could wish for more details, we have all the information which is material—that which, if we were about to meet the man, it would most import us to know.

Strange it is to read in one book that we know almost nothing about Shakespeare, and in the next book to listen to an attack upon his honour as an artist and his character as a man. Yet so it is. One tells us that his plays were not his own creations, but mere lyrical glorifications of the inventions of others, his plots taken from old plays, his characters copied from books or from life. No doubt; but Homer, Marlowe, Goethe, Burns, and others fall under the same ban, since all of them made

free of what was old, familiar, and well known. Goethe did not invent the legend of Faust, Burns did not create the balladry of Scotland. What this means is best seen by taking the old Kyd play called "Hamlet" and studying it alongside the miracle of Shakespeare by the same name. As water unto wine, as winter unto summer, as jew's-harp to an orchestra is that crude piece of blood and thunder melodrama beside the spiritual refinement, the intellectual magnificence, and the haunting beauty of the greatest of all dramas. Had he done nothing but create "Hamlet," he would be entitled to the lasting and venerative memory of a grateful humanity.

There should be no need to say, in respect to the second charge, that it is too late in the day to try to empty a pot of pitch upon the good name of the poet who is the chief distinction of our language, as he is the crowning glory of our race. Over against the slander stands the total impression made upon us by the plays of Shakespeare, an impression so large, so wise, so kind, so wholesome, so hopeful, and so sane that no man with an open mind can mistake it. There is the real Shakespeare—in the sum of his thoughts, the appeals of his spirit, the distilled essence of his genius. Surely the instinctive moral judgment of the centuries since he lived is not befogged or at fault when it turns to him as a teacher of sanity, purity, and the sanctities of mortal life. Truly did Emer-

son say, "If we tire of the Saints, Shakespeare is our city of refuge." Genius and morals have none too often been allied, but, rejecting the dictum that genius and degeneracy have a natural affinity—a cynical libel on God and man alike—be it known that our supreme poet was in nothing degenerate, in nothing ignoble, in nothing unworthy of our admiration and honour.

Some men seem to be born full-sized and never grow at all. Pitt was of that kind. Like Guizot, like Macaulay, like Calvin, "he did not grow, he was cast." Of all these men we may say that their first work was good, and that their last work was hardly any better. With Shakespeare it was not so, though we often think of him as if he had sprung full-orbed from the brow of Jove. At maturity he was as calm and sure, and did his work with such inevitable stroke, that we somehow feel that it must always have been so. Set as he is in a kind of remote sublimity by the magnitude of his achievement, he awes us, and we forget that he grew more, not less, than other men. One has only to study his work at different periods of his life to see that, instead of coming all at once to his supreme power, he grew in wisdom, in stature, and in the grace of his art. In his earlier plays we see him testing his tones, trying his power, and slowly finding his way to the right use of his genius; his later work reveals his mastery.

Three temptations assailed Shakespeare in full force, as they assail every great soul, and there were times when the result was in grave doubt. It is not an accident that his early poems and plays deal with the fascinations of physical passion—a riot of fancy playing about the themes of Beauty, Lust, and Death. He was a young man, aglow with red blood, full of animal zest and the teeming fancies of an April morning. What is remarkable is that, at the age of twenty-seven, he saw passion for what it is, in terms of misery to the sinner and death to the victim—saw through its blinding rapture to the badge of mourning underneath. Nowhere is this more vividly revealed than in the Sonnets. Whether the story of the Sonnets be fact or fiction, he at least learned that an unworthy woman smirches honour, wakens but defiles fancy, and makes the poet-soul waste its spiritual gift in the praise of a form of death. He was still young, and if he learned that lesson early, he learned it well and once for all.

Howbeit, his strongest lure and severest trial lay elsewhere, as may be seen in "Love's Labour's Lost," which is a significant bit of autobiography. Full of all manner of experiments, it shows the conflict between the artificial and the real, as if written in two moods and stuck together, with the effect, as one has said, of a rosebush growing out of bones. What should a man do with his intellect?—that is the problem of the play. Should

it be filled with study, spent in society, burnt in passion, or tortured in striving after style? Often the setting down of a problem in words solves it, and Shakespeare arose from writing his play with his mind made up. More trying still was the temptation, such as besets every poet, to escape from the bitter, old, and haggard actual into the lovely, ideal world of his own building. Shelley and Keats failed here, teaching us that one pays too great a price if, to attain the vision of a seer, he fails of being a practical and useful man. Shakespeare was no visionary, but a man of vision, equally in the world of practical affairs and in the realm of spiritual realities, and this it is that gives him his sceptre of power.

Again and again in his early plays he shows us the folly of those who live an unreal life, and the rude awakening to which they come. Romeo and Jaques, to name no others, lived in a dream-world, mistaking it for reality. Only, Jaques never woke up, but went on musing in his half-humorous melancholy to the end,

"In God's vast house; a curious guest,  
Seeing how all works take their flight."

Falstaff imagines that he can laugh away the hard facts of life, but he dies with a broken heart. One of the deepest lessons we can learn from Shakespeare is the duty, the necessity alike for the sanity of our minds and the saving of our souls, of

seeing clearly the realities of life and facing them bravely. Delusion invites disaster, and lack of courage leads us into a dark wood of the soul, into a tangle of treachery, tragedy, and woe. By the same bright-eyed sagacity the poet himself, while writing these plays, learned to look on life as it is, without idealisation and without despair, and so became one of the great masters and deliverers of the human spirit.

Insistently, consistently, eloquently he emphasises the value of clear-seeing in behalf of sanity and success in spiritual affairs, as well as in practical achievement. By what means do men attain to mastery in the practical world?—that is the question asked and answered in all the historical plays; as, later, in the tragedies, the problem is how can man win spiritual victory? Thus Shakespeare grew until with every faculty finely poised, his thought ripened by time, his heart tender, his art perfect, he was ready for his long flight into the dark tragic world, in which he faced the ultimate issues of life. What he found in that abyss, how he confronted the awful mystery of evil, with what insight he portrayed the horror of sin and the splendour of virtue, all the world knows. Methinks he reached the uttermost depths in "Othello," which gives one the feeling of being in a dungeon where the air is hot, stifling, unbearable, as if to suffocate the soul by the very intensity of its terror.

No one need to be told that Shakespeare is not professedly, or by first intention, a spiritual teacher. He is a great soul in love with life, a master artist who has the power to portray life as he saw it and felt it in forms befitting its beauty and terror, its humour and tragedy, as if life had found a soul deep enough to mirror its secrets. He has no creed to expound, no dogma to defend. And this it is that makes his witness to the spiritual meaning of life so impressive, so weighty, for that the depth and force of his insight becomes by virtue of its lucidity and veracity, a testimony to the truth that the underlying, almighty essence of the world is good. No sooner does one open his pages than one detects an atmosphere, an attitude of spirit which distils itself in the mind softly, as the dew, inducing a mood of blended reverence, wonder, and confidence, as of one who has faced the worst and who smiles at our fears. Not without struggle, not without agony, did he attain to the two great prizes of life, beside which pure gold is mud indeed—freedom and forgiveness; but he won the victory most worth the winning, and after "The Tempest" came the serene sunset and "the star-crowned night."

What did the tragic catastrophe mean to Shakespeare? He accepted the Greek view of tragedy which found its secret to lie not in the whim of fate, but in the character of man; its nature being that of a test, precisely calculated to the frailty of



our hero, whatever that frailty might be. Often that frailty is essentially noble, as in the case of Othello, but it works his undoing none the less. For each man is tested by his own nature and situation. The test for Othello would have been no test at all for Hamlet, who would have seen through Iago at a glance and outwitted him at every turn. Certainly Hamlet would not have murdered Desdemona on mere suspicion. Nor would the test of Hamlet have been any trial for Othello, who would have put an end to the king without parley or delay. As it is, each is caught in his own mesh, tried in a furnace white-hot for the testing and making of character. In the end evil fails and fails, albeit not without dragging the innocent and noble into the circle of its malice and disaster. Why must Cordelia die? Is it because the universe is unmoral or immoral? No. It is because we are so linked together that when a great wrong is done, the lovely and true-hearted are hurt with the rest. The snake was indeed wounded unto death, but it still writhed, and with its dying sting it struck the lofty and pure.

What wonder that Shakespeare was fascinated by the dark mystery of evil! Who does not shudder and wonder at a thing so cunning, yet so stupid, so clever yet so short-sighted; that vicious and malignant thing that took shape in Iago, plunged Hamlet into woe, and slew Cordelia—the hideous thing that struck Lincoln down when

his wisdom and tenderness were most needed, and nailed Jesus to the Cross outside the city gate. Shakespeare brooded over that mystery, and did not write until he had come to certain conclusions as to its nature and how to deal with it. He saw that it is incapable of cohesion; that it is anarchy, having in itself the seeds of its own overthrow; that the order of the world is against it—and, therefore, that it is not, and cannot be, eternal. So far from being a proof of “an evil genius” who conducts human affairs, it is everywhere pushed down, self-defeated, slain even in the hour of its seeming triumph by the goodness of those whom it slays.

Some things, too, he makes plain as to our method of dealing with evil. The bookish, doctrinaire method is ineffective and useless, as we are shown in the life of Brutus. We must be cautious and wary, as Hamlet was, lest by undue haste, and without seeing how intricate and complex it is, we do more harm than good, or, worse still, do evil in the name of good. For Hamlet was no weakling smitten with paralysis of will, but a great gentleman doing his gentlest and bravest, with a sad smile and a gay humour—feigning insanity that he might keep his sanity—in a world not only wicked and absurd, but ghostly and uncanny; a mournful and majestic soul who embodies the wistful perplexity and haunting hesitation of humanity in the midst of the years. And

where is the ideal, pursued by evil and overtaken by death? It still lives and shines. Our poet makes us feel that it were better to be a Desdemona, dead, than an Iago alive. When Hamlet falls, and Cordelia dies, we are appalled. Yet, though in one sense they go down, in another sense, as one has truly said, they are rather set free from life than deprived of it. We know that the end is not yet, that we have not seen all—that sorrow or suffering in fact count for little, and greatness of soul for much or all.

How can we escape this clutch and taint and tragedy of evil? Here Shakespeare has much to tell for our health of soul, much of abiding profit to remember. He everywhere shows that tragedy is the fruit of treachery and that treachery has its roots in obsession—some one thing that gets so close to the mind that it can see nothing else, blinds it, preys upon it, making a man first a fanatic, and then, it may be, a criminal. Macbeth was a man of noble nature; his wife was a lovely woman. They became obsessed with ambition for power, and to what dark depths of sin and shame that mad blindness led, that mighty tragedy reveals, the while it shows the torture of their hag-haunted souls. This lesson, taught so often by our supreme poet, is for each of us, teaching us to keep our poise, and to flee an obsession as a plague. Whatever fastens itself upon the mind, shutting out the light, marring the proportions and perspectives

of things, forebodes disaster. No matter what it is, cast it from thee, for it is better that one of thy members perish than that thy soul should fall into the pit!

What is the final impression or mood that Shakespeare leaves with us? Read "Hamlet," read "King Lear," read "Othello" and testify if it be not a mood of chastened wonder, of softened pity, of death-defying hope. If Prospero was Shakespeare in old age—grown old without being sad, wise without being cynical—serene, forgiving, gentle, a master of life by self-surrender to its highest laws, let my last end be like that! There is something cleansing in the spirit of Shakespeare, a grace of universal sympathy, of penetrating humanity, a Pity, as Romain Rolland has said, so profound and all-embracing that it would heal the woes of the world. Truly, here is a hint, and more than a hint, of the mercy of God and His everlasting gentleness. As Goethe said, he seems to solve all our riddles, and yet we cannot put our finger upon the word of solution. It cannot be stated in a word, or in a formula, but is a thing deep and ineffable which gathers and grows in the heart of one who dares to make trial of the gospel of Courage, Sanity, and Charity.

As Flaubert said, the greatest geniuses never conclude; only God may do that. Nowhere does Shakespeare argue in behalf of a life to come.

He does not need to do so. "A priest to us all of the wonder and bloom of the world," he makes us feel it. Tragedy, by showing us sublime pictures of human passion and death, reveals the Infinite in man, prophesying his august destiny. What the Poet himself believed, and how he came to his faith, we know from his Sonnets—most vividly of all in the wonderful 146th Sonnet, the truth of which one feels overwhelmingly standing beside his grave at Stratford: "And Death once dead, there's no more dying then." Only two other spots on earth have given me an equal sense of immortality as a reality; one is Westminster Abbey, and the other the grave of Emerson in Sleepy Hollow!

For the rest, life is neither a *Tempest* nor a *Midsummer Night's Dream*. More often, alas! it is a *Comedy of Errors*. You may find it *As You Like It*, or make *Much Ado About Nothing* and declare *Love's Labour's Lost*. But time will teach you, if you be wise, and have an understanding heart, that *All's Well That Ends Well* and that in the long last every man receives *Measure for Measure*.

**"O LOVE THAT WILT NOT LET  
ME GO"**

Almighty Father, we would worship Thee in one accord, with purity and reverence of heart, communing with Thy spirit in the quiet of this evening, and looking by faith for the dawn of Thine everlasting mercy. How foolish of us to doubt Thee, since it is Thou Thyself that hast set us the problem that disturbs us, Thou Thyself the reason for our quest of Thee. O teach us this deep truth, lest we go on straining our minds to understand Thee, instead of yielding our heart to the Light that followeth all our way, the joy that seeketh us through pain, and the Love that will not let us go.

Thou ever-living God, who appointest to all their tasks and measurest the days of each life, teach us anew that Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves, and that when heart and flesh fail Thou art our refuge and redemption. O Divine Love, which suffered and gave, cleanse us, we humbly pray; make pure our heart—by fire, if need be, only make us clean—that we may see the beauty of Thy holiness, and seek it with eager, earnest hearts. Forgive our sins and imperfections, our feebleness and coldness of faith, the waywardness of our desires, the irresolution of our will, and the broken obedience which we bring to Thee.

Lord, forgive us, and lead us in the way of Him who lived Thy human life upon earth, that we may know Him and be found of Him. Help us to live in these strange and awful days more nearly as Thou wouldst have us live, and as we can live if we accept the gift that is freely offered of a grace that redeems us from weakness and sin, from weariness and despair, from impatience and fear. Whisper to our hearts and tell us once more the story of Thy grace, that it may become part of our lonely, inner life, setting our discords to music, and bringing us into that eternal fellowship where there is peace.

As Thou dost love us with a love that never sleeps, O, may we love Thee, our Father, and may morning and evening find us ready to do Thy will. Thou rest for the weary, Thou healing for the wounded heart, Thou comfort for the sorrowing, lead us out of the shadow into light, out of death into life, out of war into peace. In the Name of Jesus., Amen.

## XI

### "O LOVE THAT WILT NOT LET ME GO"

"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor anything else in all creation, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus."—*Romans* 8: 38, 39.

**I**F we had never read that text before and had no clue at all as to who wrote it, what would be the first question in our minds? No one would doubt that it is the utterance of a deeply religious soul, but many would fall to wondering as to what kind of a life he had lived that allowed him to have and to hold a faith so joyous, so triumphant. Some would think at once that he must have lived a sheltered life, secluded from the untoward happenings of the world; else he never could have attained to such a faith, and kept it.

But this is no fragment of unknown authorship. Of the man who wrote it we have detailed knowledge, both of his inner life and his outer life, from his own pen. Nor will any one say that the life of St. Paul was secluded, sheltered, or unexciting. All through his letters he tells us of the storm and conflict, the stress and strain of his life, which was a combat against many odds, and often there were heart-aches, and almost heart-



break. Despite his affliction, notwithstanding the oppositions, in weariness, in danger on land and on sea, he went his journey as a pilgrim teacher of faith, that faith deepening with life, and coming at last as a crown and a benediction of joy.

How, then, was he persuaded so utterly, so victoriously? Not by mere argument, not by any series of propositions, but by a deep, inner experience of the reality, of the rhythm and the radiance of life as seen in the light of Jesus. And across the Christian ages this mighty music has marched, many voices blending in one chant. Now it is Ambrose; now it is Francis, with his divine glee; now it is Luther, with his deep bass voice; now it is Wesley, with his myriad melodies; and now it is Matheson, with his lyric of life and love everlasting. They strike the same key; they seem to sing antiphonally, answering each other across the ages, and it is one music as of yore.

Let me ask you, then, on this our parting Sabbath evening, to study with me a great Christian hymn. Like every such hymn, that lyric which opens with the unforgettable line, "O Love that wilt not let me go," grew up out of the deep heart of the man; a man fiery and daring of soul, whose history is the story of heavy handicap, of a terrible trial of faith, and of a triumph at last by submission. Of him we may say what Gladstone said of Henry Fawcett in the memorial in the Abbey: "His heroic acceptance of the calamity of blind-

ness has left a memorable example of the power of a brave man to transmute loss into gain, and wrest victory from misfortune." While yet a child his mother discovered that his vision was defective. For a while, by the aid of a magnifying glass and large type, he could read, but the darkness began to deepen while it was yet morning. When he went to college his sisters went with him, and he used their eyes. In spite of this handicap he attained to distinction, chiefly in the field of philosophy, and very early we hear that exquisite wizardry of style in essays that were beautiful and gracious.

He began his ministry appalled by the fact that his infirmity closed many a door, and, indeed, in his first charge in the little town on the Clyde there was some opposition to him on the ground of his blindness. Think of what this meant to a young man who had the honourable ambitions of a scholar, a man with a poet's soul, to whom the glimpse of sunlight on flowing water was as the memory of one much loved and long dead; to whom the mists trailing over the Scottish hills were as the garment of God. And every day the darkness deepened and the flashes of light were more fitful and less frequent, until at last he was blind, ere it was yet noon—dark, dark, irrevocably dark. And to darkness was added doubt. It was a time of upheaval and unsettlement in the religious world, when Science was crass and Faith

stood abashed. Matheson was caught in that great crash, and his temple of faith came tumbling and falling about him. Indeed, he became an absolute atheist for a time, believing neither in God nor in immortality. In those years the book that was closest to him was the Book of Job, its profound and terrible questions never far away. But he was no blatant atheist—who can be who has the heart of a man? Having lost faith he was preparing to leave his pulpit when something profound, perhaps untraceable, happened in his heart. This was the man, this was his state of mind, who wrote that lyric:

O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee.  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

It is indeed strange that a man who was an atheist should have written this sublime lyric in praise of the love of God. How could it be? Evidently atheism is not the end. Those hundred people who have written to me while I have been in London telling me that they have lost all faith, that they have become atheists, must take it to heart that that is not the end, but it should be the beginning, if not the discovery of the real basis of our religious faith. In a great passage in that book called "War and Peace," by Count Tolstoy, we are brought face to face, out of the troubled

life of Tolstoy himself, with the fact that atheism does not end it all. Whom do men deny? If there be no God men would not have thought about Him, much less denied Him. Matheson let go of God, let go of everything, and then he felt in his heart the tug of something that would not let him go. Wherefore did he take that tug to be a token of love? Because the one thing that we know in our poor human experience that never lets go, that never fails, that never gives up, is love. Here, then, is the basis of our faith; not simply that we believe in God, or find it hard to believe in Him, but also, and much more, that He believes in us. Our faith in Him may grow dim amid the dark facts of life; His faith in us never fails. Our hold upon Him may any moment fail; His hold upon us can never let go. The tie between God and man may be infinitely elastic, but it is infinitely strong. We may defy Him indefinitely, we may wander from Him into a far, far country; but there is a tie that can never be broken. As if He had said: Wander there as you may, and find the path forlorn and hard; deny Me in theory and in practice, there is one thing you cannot make Me do, you cannot make Me let you go; I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness will I draw thee. Truly man can defy God for long—how long no one knows, how far no one can measure; but in the end the mighty love of God, than which

there is nothing stronger in the universe, must triumph. Divine defeat is impossible.

Others have sung of the tenderness of divine love; Matheson sings of its tenacity. He will not let us go; that is the consolation we supremely need in dark and lonely times when all His billows pass over us. He will not let us go; that is the redeeming truth that we most need to know, when conscience and the spirit of God join to convict us of sin and disobedience, and we have no heart left in us. He will not let us go; surely that is the truth we must take down with us into the valley of the shadow of sorrow, our rod and our staff, when we cannot see our way.

What wonder, then, that upon this truth, which affirmed itself in the very moment of denial, the poet rested his weary head? The lines were written on June 6, 1882, in the manse of Inellan. He was alone. In the few restrained words that he ever wrote about the hymn he confides to us that it was an hour of Gethsemane when some bitter sorrow lay in his heart, the nature of which he does not reveal. This hymn was the fruit of that sorrow. He tells us that he had the feeling that it was dictated through him, that he acted as an amanuensis, that it never received any alteration or correction at his hand, and that it was all finished, perfected, in five minutes, just as "Crossing the Bar" came complete into the mind of Tennyson.

Fighting his fate in rebel mood, resisting the will of God, he found out what that will was. He was wise enough and brave enough to accept it, and in the acceptance made the discovery that in darkness there is a new and strange light.

O Light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to Thee,  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

Newman called us to follow the "Kindly Light, o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till the night is gone," but here is a Light that follows us "all our way." Last summer on the lake, as our boat sped along in the night, the moon made a path of rippling fire behind us, and it followed us all our way. Youth is self-confident and self-sufficient, and it is well that it is so, else it would lack initiative; but he is no wise man who, living to mid-life, has not learnt that it is not in man who walks to direct his way. We plan and scheme, we counsel and devise, yet how feeble is our wisdom and how little way ahead can we see! "One step enough"—but there is a Light shining from behind and within that follows us all our way, that will show us the next step, and the next; and if we follow it and obey it, it will shine more and more unto the perfect day.

The third stanza of the hymn deepens, and the music becomes strangely sweet, and the words tell

us things that are secret, that seem incredible in their beauty, and unfathomable in their mystery. Every line of this lyric is charged with tenderness and power, but hardly any line in it so flashes like a silver arrow shot in the twilight as that line—

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to Thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain;  
That morn shall tearless be;

—lines the truth of which is confirmed by all the great sufferers of the world. What does it mean? Have we misread the meaning of pain utterly? Can it be true that through all the tragedy and woe of the world, the divine joy is trying to find its way to us? Yes, if we accept the witness of those who have walked the path of pain, and none more convincing, none more authentic than that Lone Sufferer on the dark cross outside the city gate. Soon or late every mortal comes to the cross; by whatever path he may journey he comes at last to that place at the foot of the cross where, though severed by time and distance, the great communion of the saints assembles—the one spot where the eternal mystery whispers to us the meaning of life and the world. The cross is eternal, the symbol of that law that runs all through life—the law of life through death, of salvation through suffering, of sanctification by sacrifice.

But listen. As he takes up his cross he soon

finds out that, instead of bearing the cross, the cross is bearing him:

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.

And consider the fruit of this faith, in the life of the preacher himself. First of all, it made him divinely catholic in his sympathies with all the seekers and followers of Christ; so much so that he was wont to say that if all the heretics that had ever been burnt at the stake were now living and each a pastor of a church, nothing could give him greater joy than to preach for each one in turn. All that he asked was that he might have the liberty to tell the story of a love that never lets go. This faith has found voice in that other poem, "Gather us in," a faith whose sympathy went so far and so wide as to include men beyond the Christian pale, grey seekers after God in the olden time. He believed they would be gathered in, that they had all understood the meaning of a love that never failed.

What wonder, then, that his preaching became more and more the waving of a wand of power, and his audience became as one man, to whom he spoke soul to soul; a lake, so to speak, to which the soul of the preacher communicated itself, now in ripples, now in waves. Such a preacher could not



remain unknown, and when he was called to his great church in Edinburgh, for thirteen years a blind man was the shepherd of two thousand souls, leading them out of shadow into light! The note of his gospel was gladness. There was a wild glee in his heart, as of one who had discovered a great secret and could not keep it—captivating, infectious happiness—all through those years, till he retired at last to devote himself to literary work. And such books!—chief among them "Studies of the Portrait of Jesus," pictures of that face, that life, drawn by the sight of the soul and the delicate tracery of a religious genius.

Then there were little books of meditation in which you busy men and women amidst these days that rack your souls will find such sweet hidden manna, if you will read them; books of little page-long essays, like this one on the phrase "Love is not puffed up." Listen:

"There is a difference between love and duty. Duty has a sense of merit; love has none. Duty has always the feeling that it has done very well; love never admits that it has come up to the mark. Whence this humility of love as compared with duty? Is not love the higher of the two? Yes. Duty is talent; love is genius. But why should genius be more humble than talent? Because it really has less trouble. Genius does what it must; talent does what it can. Therefore, talent is

more conceited than genius. It is more conscious of labour because it really has more labour. Love is the genius of the heart. It does its work because it cannot help it—not because it ought, but because it must. That is why it repudiates merit. That is why it is not puffed up."

How perfect it is, how lucid, how simple—one is half angry that one has not thought of it before. And the final fruit of this faith was an apostolate in behalf of immortality. No one of our day has written more happily, more victoriously, about the life beyond than Matheson; no one, unless it be dear George Macdonald, who was half a saint and half a child, and altogether an angel. Matheson was utterly without doubt as to the life hereafter. Love will not let us go; that much he knew; and it lighted up all the dark chambers of life and death and beyond. What a ministry in a world of grief and graves! What a faith to lay to heart and live upon and live by! Whoso will trust it will find that he will not have to keep it, it will keep him. When he died, by the side of the grave stood a huge floral emblem, a square of white flowers, in the centre of which the last lines of this hymn were spelled out in red rosebuds:

"And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be."



## **CAN YOU KNOW GOD?\***

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**\*This and the following sermons, included with the foregoing City Temple Sermons, were delivered in Cedar Rapids.**

Infinite Father, Thy still and holy presence has touched with awe the groping souls of men in every land, in every age, subduing their minds to wonder, softening their hearts to worship. Lead us to Thyself this day by the old and quiet way of prayer, by the high road of thought, by the inward path of love, and lift us into the glad communion of all the seekers and finders of Thy will. Thy love is life, Thy will is peace, Thy truth is joy; make us wise to obey that we may know, eager to do that we may be free, trusting the Love that telleth the stars by name and healeth the hearts of men. Mighty Father, whose we are, exalt, refine, and redeem us to Thyself by the sweet mystery of Thy grace.

Thou dost not rule us from a far-off throne, but by Thy spirit of grace and truth in our hearts; Thou makest the way of life known, help us to walk in it faithfully and without fear. Teach us to confide in Thy immeasurable love, Thy unfathomable care, Thy inscrutable mercy which enfoldeth us everywhere, and upholdeth us always, knowing that our trust is inspired by the Spirit whom it trusts; that our faith is the fruit of Thy faithfulness that never fails. Show us how near Thou art to our hearts, hearing our prayer before it is uttered, and drawing us by wistful longings to the life we long so much to live.

Lord, we have sinned in thought and word and act, setting our wills against the light of Thy truth and the patience of Thy love, and it has spread and deepened till it darkens and beshadows our way. Earth does not name it sin, but we know in our hearts that it is, since it hides Thy presence so, makes Thee seem far away, and leaves us to walk alone. Forlorn and weary, we can but come to Thee even in our sin, beseeching Thee to forgive, to cleanse, to heal our hurt and heart-ache, and to say to us as once of old, "Since thou hast put away thy sin, I also put thy sin away." Let it be even so, O Lord of our hearts, that we may know the strength of being clean and the gladness of being free of soul.

Thou who art revealed in the works of Thy hands, in the wonders of earth and sky, reveal Thyself to us, unveiling the beauty of Thy grace in hearts made gracious, and the reality of Thy Truth in lives made true. The sands of life run swiftly; help us to work while it is day, telling Thy truth in love, obeying Thy will in joy, serving our fellows, that we may learn, ere the night cometh, that love, the crown of life, lives for ever, stronger than death. Not in agitation, not in anxiety, but in a deep desire for truth, purity, and goodness, we would be one with Thee in the spirit of Jesus, in whose name we offer our prayer. Amen.

## XII

### CAN MAN KNOW GOD?

"I found an altar to the Unknown God."—*Acts* 17:23.

"This is the eternal life, that they might know God."—*John* 17:3.

"Now we know in part."—*I Corinthians* 13:9.

**H**OW eloquent was that altar to the Unknown God erected in Athens. It was not an altar of atheism, but of that eternal mysticism which grows up in the heart of man in the presence of the mystery of life. There were many gods in Athens, so many that it was said to be easier to find a god than a man, but all those myriad gods did not explain the mystery of the world. Something deeper than any philosophy lingered in the light, in the blades of grass, the leaf, the sparrow on the wall, and the man had hope that some day the great beautiful thought which hovered on the confines of the mind would at last alight. Hence an altar to the unknown, awful Reality deeper than thought, above all gods, before which they bowed with awe-struck reverence.

Unfortunately, we have no records of the rites used in the worship at that altar of mystery. No

doubt it was a silent worship; as the Samoan chief said to the missionary: "We know that at night Some One goes by amongst the trees, but we never speak of it." So it is to-day. Other altars may have fallen, but that altar to the Unknown remains. In the beginning was mystery, and as knowledge widens, the mystery deepens. If the old mysteries disappear, new ones take their places, and the shadow becomes vaster, more inclusive, more pervasive. Yet it loses its chill and gloom and grows more gracious and purposeful, and in the darkness a sense of an Infinite Reality makes itself felt. Because that Reality is most real therefore it is most hidden, and man needs "the infinite liberty of the shadow."

Can man know God? If so, how? Let us take the first question first, albeit to reverse the order and tell how man can know God would be to show that He can be known. At the front door of our inquiry we are met by that attitude of mind, much in vogue a few years ago, which Huxley called by the name of Agnosticism. It does not affirm, it does not deny, but remains neutral in respect of the deeper issues of life, content to say that it does not know. As a reaction from the extremes of over-belief, as a protest against those who mistake faith for knowledge, as a rebuke to the blasphemous familiarity with ineffable things, this mood commands respect. But as a final philosophy it is untenable, in that it assumes not simply

the impotence of the human, but of the divine mind; since a God man cannot know is at the same time a God who cannot make Himself known. Our inability to reach Him is possible, only because of His inability to make Himself intelligible. With those who make a flippant use of this mood to put out of mind the profound and poignant problems of life, we have not to do here. Verily, they have their reward, and may be left to the tragedies of life which subdue, if they do not dismay, the strongest man.

Still less is there need to tarry in the midst of a war of words. Spencer used the word Unknowable as the title of one section of his "First Principles." But in the text he used, instead, the word Unknown—for how can we know that a thing is unknowable? Even the word Unknown involves us in deep difficulty, since we must know something of a subject to say that we know nothing about it. When we say that we know nothing about biology, we imply that we know with what the science deals, though not acquainted with its principles and details. As Socrates put it in a famous saying, "We only know that we know nothing, and we do not even know that." If our knowledge is relative, so, surely, is our ignorance, else we are doomed to perpetual spiritual idiocy. But enough; if we go beyond the title used by Spencer we find this very remarkable passage:



"Besides that definite consciousness of which logic formulates the laws, there is also an indefinite consciousness which cannot be formulated. Besides complete thoughts, and besides the thoughts which though incomplete admit of completion, there are thoughts which it is impossible to complete and yet which are still real, in the sense that they are normal affections of the intellect. Observe, in the first place, that every one of the arguments by which the relativity of our knowledge is demonstrated distinctly postulates the positive existence of something beyond the relative. To say that we cannot know the Absolute is, by implication, to affirm that there is an Absolute. In the very denial of our power to learn what the Absolute is, there lies hidden the assumption that it is; and the making of this assumption proves that the Absolute has been present to the mind, not as a nothing but as a something."

Truly he wrote with a heavy hand, in a style as ponderous as a procession of elephants—his pages a dark forest in which the Absolute is present as a Something to the mind, inspiring all our thought, yet playing hide-and-seek with us! But what did he mean by that indefinite consciousness, and those incomplete thoughts? Did ever any one who thought reverently of God, much less held communion with Him, imagine that He could be an-

alyzed or defined? Certainly not the Bible. The fact of an unknown and perhaps unknowable element in the divine nature, an agnosticism which is an inevitable shadow of faith, nowhere finds finer expression than in that Book of the Presence. In one of the boldest passages ever written about the nature of the Eternal we are told that the seer, hidden in the cleft of a rock, saw only the vague, vanishing glory of God. Wherever the word God is mentioned in the Bible, it carries, as in no other book, the sense of an invisible and unknown grandeur, rebuking alike a perverted piety which would define Him and an agnosticism which would draw a circle of thought and shut Him out.

Limited our knowledge surely is, limited in myriad ways, but absolute nescience is an absurdity and a contradiction. "Now we know in part"—a tiny part, it may be—but our knowledge is real as far as it goes. The surgeon does not have to drain all the blood out of my body to know what my blood is. A few drops will do. We do not have to empty the ocean in order to know the quality of its waters that wander afar in distant seas. A cupful is enough. No man of science need journey all the way to the sun to learn what its elements are. He can find that out in his study. The man of science knows in part, but he knows; the man of faith knows in part, but he knows. How do we come to this knowledge of God, and

what is its revealing secret? Surely the answer to the question, Can man know God? is that he cannot really know anything else! "Oh, to preach or hear some day a worthy sermon on 'In Him we live and move and have our being!'" cried Phillips Brooks in one of his letters. Of necessity our deepest knowledge of God comes through what is most godlike in us, as ever the mystics have taught. Here lies the meaning of that profound word which Pascal heard whispered in his heart: "Thou wouldst not seek Me hadst thou not already found Me," and upon this principle rests the way of life as Jesus taught it.

Two methods seem to have been employed by the Master in His efforts to make man aware of God, and while they were often, if not always, blended in their use, we may keep them apart in our study. The first was that by which He sought to direct the attention of men to the unrecognised presence of God in their own thoughts and impulses, for He knew that men possess what He possessed, only they do not recognise it as God. This truth underlies nearly all His parables, especially those which use the best there is in man to teach us of God. Always He proceeded on the principle that men have a light and power which, if obeyed and followed, make God a reality in the heart. Here is a great secret, if only men would look into it, yield to it, trusting what is highest in the soul to teach them the highest reality. Once a man

makes this discovery, he will no longer think of God as far off, weaving veils of wonder on the hills of mystery, but very near, even in the hidden chamber of his heart.

For example, no man was ever more certain of God than Newman, and when he examined himself so mercilessly, as was his habit, he found that the basis of his certainty was the moral sense. Not otherwise could he account for that awful voice within him, passing judgment upon his motives, his thoughts, his acts, demanding that he live righteously. He had no faculties or facts other than those which every man has by virtue of his humanity, and they gave him an overwhelming sense of God. Those who think they do not know God should reflect that no imaginable dance of atoms, no conceivable action or reaction of forces, could have produced the Moral Sense. To create a Moral Law, or a single tenet of it, there must be a superior Moral Will to enact it. Faith in the moral sense is not the enemy of reason; it is trust in a Moral Reason greater, deeper, and wiser than our own. Newman was right. The Moral Sense is God within us, whom to know aright is life forever more, and to obey whom is to be free and clean. No wonder a great man of science wrote over his door the words, "Live innocently, God is here." No faint echo, no dim image, but God Himself, the ground and goal of all things, lives and speaks in each of us.

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"By all that He requires of me  
I know what He Himself must be."

Whence came that high and pure ideal which beckons us, commands us, casting over our fleeting days the white light of the Eternal? Whence that haunting beauty which eludes while it allures us, leading us from the animal to the angel shape? Man did not create it. He cannot destroy it. It was ere we were born; it flashes and glows in our hearts; it will shine over our graves when we have fallen into dust. What is it? What can it be save the presence of God Himself within us hallowing our lives, the very light and glory of His face! By as much as we love it, obey it, and follow its radiance, by so much do we really live. Infidelity here is the death in us of all that makes for the beauty and joy and rhythm of our days. And what shall we say of that impulse to love, to pity, to serve, to give ourselves to others, if it be not the spirit of God moving to and fro in our hearts! "He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God, for God is Love,"—there is the key to the truest knowledge of the deepest reality!

After this manner Jesus sought to awaken men to the wonder of facts before unobserved, and lead them to know Him in whom they lived and whose presence was as the breath of life. His other method was used less frequently, and defies all analysis. In moments of deep emotion, and under the sway of the love and truth which He allowed

to rule His life, He seemed to speak as God: "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me." At such times He did not simply tell the truth; He imparted it. His spirit became incandescent, and the spirit of God within Him leaped like a flame in His words, bringing those who heard, and we who read even to-day, into an instant and profound sense of God. Such was the rapt and revealing mood in which He said:

"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace. Neither do I condemn thee."

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

How can man know God? Ask the little bird how it knows that the soft air will bear it up on its flight amid the living green of rustling woods and the glint of laughing waters! By the same token, we know Him whom we love by yielding to His promptings, by surrender to His will, by trusting ourselves to His "love that wilt not let us go." Evermore the principle of Jesus holds true: "Whoso wills to do the will of My Father shall know of the truth"—shall know, not guess, not fear, not falter. He shall know, and walk "the big eternal ways with immortal lures calling him ever on"; shall know, and feel beneath his feet the

way of life everlasting rising to the heights; shall know, and his good right hand of brotherly love will take a firmer, finer grasp of his fellows and lift them when they fall. Aye, he shall know the truth that makes man free, makes him grow younger as he grows older, gentler as he grows wiser, sweet of heart, full of hope, happy and undismayed by dark death and all that it may hide or hold within its heavy draperies. This is life renewed and radiant, life in its splendour and prophecy, life

"In clearest vision, amplitude of mind,  
And Reason in her most exalted mood."

Profound thinking is the privilege of the few; profound living is open to all. Who by thinking can find out God? asked a seer of the far olden time. Action is the word of God, said Mazzini; thought alone is only His shadow. But Love it is that joins thought and action, duty and deed, vision and service, that so the Vision may grow and abide, making the path of life shine more and more unto the Perfect Day. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him," wrote that disciple whom Jesus loved; with whom agree all the saints and mystics who have made trial of this deep and daring Way of Life. "By love He may be gotten and holden, but by thought never," is the testimony of Plotinus, and a cloud of witnesses confirm his insight. With one

accord they tell us that Love is the great revealer, that "Love is above all, and when it prevails in us all we shall all be lovely and in love with God and one another."

Knowledge of truth is knowledge of God, but Love is the inner secret, the whole secret, the open secret of the great mysticism—for mysticism is the love of God. It is therefore that the mystic knows, not by vague rumour and confused report, but by the fact that he passes from the outer court into the inner sanctuary where the sweet voice sounds and the vision dwells. He is the true realist, the true scientist, the thinker who faces the profoundest facts of the life of God in the soul of man. Now we know in part, but Love foretells a day when faith shall cease to be, when Hope shall find its haven of peace shut in by the Hills of God, and we shall know even as we are known—for we shall be like Him whom we love.

"What if the vision tarry?  
God's time is always best;  
The true Light shall be witnessed,  
The Christ within confessed."





## **ANOTHER CHRIST**

O Lord, our God, great, eternal, wonderful in mercy, who keepest covenant with those who seek Thee with their whole heart, we seek Thy presence in deep need and humble awe. Thou who art the life of all, the Help of all who flee unto Thee, the hope of those who cry to Thee in sorrow or longing, cleanse us, we beseech Thee, from our sins; cleanse our bodies and souls even the secret chambers of our being, that with pure hearts and clear minds, with perfect love and calm hope, we may offer our prayer in faith and be healed by Thy grace.

Without Thee our life ebbs out its little day in weariness and weakness, in folly and futility, aye, in sins that stain and in sorrow that sears. Illumine our thoughts, purify our purposes, renew our languishing wills, and all our spiritual lack supply. Grant unto us patience, fidelity, steadfastness, and loyalty to the truth as we are able to see it. Make manifest to us Thy nearness, that we may have a sense of Thy help in our toil, knowing that nothing set for us to do is so small or common that we may not magnify Thy name in it.

If any have come to this temple troubled in spirit, disturbed and apprehensive, expecting to go out much as they came in, with the same haunting heaviness of heart, Lord disappoint them. Lift their burden by giving them strength to bear it; surprise them by the graciousness of Thy help, and enable them to take from Thee as ungrudgingly as Thou givest to them. If they are deeply wounded of soul, hardly daring to hope that anything can afford them the relief they seek, heal them that they may leave here their sorrow and take a song away.

Of no one else can we ask so much, for none other is so able and willing to lift up our hearts when life has bowed them low. Humbly and confidently we offer our prayer, remembering Thy help in days past, when we heard Thy call to higher things; when we were bidden to surrender the shadow and grasp the reality. Teach us, O Lord, the one great secret of life, learned by all who have found Thee: to give up ourselves, all that we are, all that we have, all that we hope to be to Thee, loving Thee, praising Thee, serving Thee. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

### XIII

#### ANOTHER CHRIST

"He appeared unto them in another form."—*Mark*  
16: 12.

**O**F all pages in the Bible, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, none is more fascinating to me, none more revealing than the story of the walk to Emmaus. It is an epitome of Christian history and experience. There we have the three things that make our life worth while: the Divine Companion, the sufficient interpretation, and the mighty answer of the heart. Nowhere else do we see more plainly the sundering difference between the Bible and all other books that speak to man about things eternal. Rich, warm, ineffably beautiful, the Bible is the Book of the Presence.

This is clear, whatever else be dim; since Jesus lived our human life has been a walk to Emmaus, often lonely and sad, but haunted by a high and tender Presence. Since that day One has walked with us whom we knew not, prophecies have had new and deeper meanings, and the eventide has been full of serenity and light. Since then the heart of man has burned within him along the old worn human way, touched with strange stirrings

of beauty and of love. Here is a mighty mystical reality which no man may fathom, as incomprehensible as life itself, but which lends a glory to the world. Writing of "The Truth of Religion," Eucken speaks of it in the measured words of philosophy:

"The personality of Jesus was the turning-point of religion. It was He who brought forth the Christian standard of living, which has made all previous standards totally inadequate. In Him we saw a human career of the most homely and simple kind, passed in a remote corner of the world, little heeded by His contemporaries, and, after a brief blossoming of life, cruelly put to death. Yet that life had an energy of spirit which filled it to the brim, it had a standard which has transformed human existence to its very root, it has made inadequate what hitherto seemed to bring entire happiness. It holds us fast and refuses to be weakened by us, even when all the dogmas of the Church are seen to be of human origin."

Let us lay aside all dogmas and look at the fact which sets Jesus apart from every other teacher the world has known. If you would know the difference, take down the biography of any of the surperlative leaders of the race and read it. Take the noble book of Plato in which he describes the farewell of Socrates to his friends. It is beautiful,

tragic, pathetic, winsome. But not once does Socrates suggest that when he has left his disciples he will remain with them, a personal attendant spirit. When we open the gospel story we seem to be in another world. Jesus tells His followers that His body is withdrawn that He may be with them more intimately in spirit, not as a memory but as a living Presence. And that promise was fulfilled. Not only did He exalt and redeem men in the days of His flesh, but He continues to do so—

“And by the vision splendid,  
We are on our way attended.”

Death, so far from destroying Jesus, revealed His real nature and power. The Pilgrim Peasant became, at its touch, the mystical and eternal Christ whose unfinished life slowly shapes the world. Here is the mighty reality with which we have to do, transforming human life and giving a new date to history—its depth no more wonderful than its many-sided manifestation. When we read the Epistle of James we see that reality in what Hume called “the dry light” of reason and practical common sense. James is the father of all such as worship the goddess of reason. For him, as for Emerson, Jesus is the way to God solely on account of the virility of His teaching. No doubt he would agree with our Yankee Plato that the Church has erred in magnifying the Man until all others are dwarfed by His side, instead of lay-

ing emphasis on His words and His beautiful, sweet character. At least, one would almost infer as much from reading his Epistle.

Turning to the Epistles of Paul we find another Christ. He practically ignores the life-history of Jesus as of little moment in comparison with the overwhelming fact of His expiatory death. Save "in the spirit," St. Paul did not know Jesus, having seen Him in a luminous vision at noonday. He tells us nothing of a miraculous birth, nothing of His miracles of mercy, and scarcely anything of His wonderful teaching. No, the cross is central, creative, and prophetic in his thinking. That tragedy disclosed to him the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the mighty passion of God to reconcile the race to Himself. Again, if we open the Gospel of John we meet another Christ—the eternal Reason wearing the form of man, the creative Word made flesh. There is that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, with which, if a man identify himself by humility and sacrifice, he rises into fellowship with God.

Each of these visions is true, but no one of them is the whole truth as it is in Jesus. Somehow one feels that the reality of Christ lies too deep to be fathomed by any one of these plummets, and where there are so many good things to choose between it is wisest to take all of them together. What was true in the apostolic church has been true all down the ages. No one teacher has fathomed the

riches of truth in Christ, no one theology has exhausted it. If we read the "Didache," a manual issued about forty years after the death of St. Paul, we would hardly know that Jesus had ever been crucified. Even Marcion, albeit a great Paulinist, gave an entirely different interpretation of the death of Jesus. He held that the death of Jesus overthrew the reign of Jehovah and brought in the reign of mercy and forgiveness, and his followers were godly people distinguished by a purity of life almost ascetic.

St. Augustine was the Shakespeare of Christian theology, and he has left a record of his experience in his "Confessions"—one of the great classics of the world. There we follow him through a wayward, faultful youth, until his awakening, and then we witness his struggle to break the cords of sensuality that bound him. He was like the habit-stained, morally broken Nevarga in the Kingsley story, entitled "Yeast." Feeling utterly defiled, the poor man knelt in a desert of furze bush, and lifted his heart to God: "Then I spoke right out into the dumb, black air, and said, 'If Thou wilt be my God, good Lord who died for me, I will be Thine, dirty as I am, if Thou canst make anything of me.'" Naturally that deep and revealing experience coloured all his thinking, and out of the depths he brought the most precious truth to light. Yet even that experience did not fathom the redeeming reality of Christ.



Clement of Alexandria knew not the wild passions which swept Augustine away into the mire. He was a scholar nurtured in Greek philosophy and literature, and a certain innate purity of nature kept him unpolluted by the evils of his age. He was a restless, wide-ranging thinker who craved for some solution of the dark problems which haunt the intellect, and like Browning he found the solution in Christ. If for Augustine Jesus was the Saviour and Cleanser of the soul, for Clement He was the Light and Teacher of truth. Passing to Francis of Assisi, with his life of beauty and pity, we meet another Christ. Meeting a leper by the wayside, he saw in that forlorn figure the image of Christ, and kissed Him. For Francis, the life of Jesus was a vision of the world as love and comradeship, of purity, pity, and gladness, and in that vision he went singing through his days—a figure to haunt and bless the world till time shall be no more.

To Nicholas Herman—known in religion as Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection—Christ appeared in another form. For thirty years he was a cook in a Carmelite kitchen, and a wiser, sweeter, whiter soul has seldom lived upon this earth. Women, take notice! Here was a man who did your work, and who, amid the din and heat and litter of his drudgery, won the high prize of sainthood. His whole life was “a practice of the Presence of Christ,” and his purity of life and

charity of labour were the fruits of it. Happily he left us the story of his heart, and the path marked out by his soul into the Holy Place. To John Woolman the Quaker, Jesus appeared in another form—as the infinite, ineffable Pity at the heart of this dark world, which alone is sufficient for the infinite pathos of human life. Upon his tender heart the weary weight of the misery of the world lay like a mountain of lead. Without Christ he would have been crushed; with Him he was victor. For St. Phillips Brooks the life of Jesus was the sovereign beauty of the world. The spirit of his mind was the spirit of beauty; its depths were the depths of beauty. It was as a great artist that he thought of God, of Christ, and of the kingdom of heaven. Thus we might go from soul to soul along the Christian highway, and in each one find a new wonder, an unspeakable beauty—in each another Christ, yet always the same reality taking myriad forms.

What is this Reality which men call Christ? There are those who talk of the Divinity of Christ, and others of His Deity, as if the two were somehow different. Let us, for once, have none of this quibbling about words, since all words are inadequate, if so that we may get to the heart of this matter. The truth with which we have to do is not a metaphysical proposition; it is a spiritual reality. Perhaps we can best make it clear by asking our hearts one question: What is it that we worship?

Is it mere Power? No! Power may awe us, crush us, command us, but never yet has it won the worship of the heart. Is it knowledge? No! An infinite Intellect may invite admiration, but we do not worship Wisdom. Is it vastness? Not so! Read the Tennyson poem on "Vastness" and you will see how a cold, bare infinitude, so far from winning the love of man, strikes him dumb with terror. What, then, do we worship? Reverently let us say that, though God speak with the tongues of lightning, though He have all power so that He could remove mountains or hurl suns into space, yea, though He have all knowledge and understand all mysteries, and have not *Love*, we cannot worship Him. Only Love can win love, and if God be not Infinite Love we cannot love Him, albeit we may cower before Him, trembling and afraid. Love, only Love—Love, infinitesimally vast—that is what our own hearts tell us to seek till we find and trust unto the uttermost.

What, then, do we worship when in a mood dross-drained and exalting the heart has its way? Think it all through, up one side and down the other, and you will find that our ideal, our dream, our hope, that to which we pray, is no other than the Spirit that lived in Jesus, shone in His face, wrought in His works, and spoke in His words. If, when we look out upon the universe, now lucid and lovely, now dark and terrible, we can trust the future, even as a little child, it is because we can

trust that Spirit. The Spirit of Jesus in its strength, its gentleness, its august and awful humility, its incredible patience, its fathomless pity, its relentless love, its all-forgiving mercy, its victorious valour, its purity, its gladness—that is what is meant by the Deity of Jesus, not that He had unlimited knowledge, or power, but that the fulness of God, who is Love, dwelt in Him. Beyond that Love it is not possible for any man to imagine anything more divine. The Spirit of Jesus is the ultimate Divine Reality so far as we can know it, or need to know it.

Where that Spirit of Love is, there God is. Because it lived in Jesus in its fulness, its richness, its unclouded beauty. He is the supreme revelation of what God is. This it was that redeemed Augustine from his sin, satisfied Clement in his perplexity, gave such unearthly lustre to the life of Francis, and lifted the weight of woe from the soul of Woolman. Profound beyond thought, rich beyond measure, it takes myriad shapes, manifesting its infinite variety of beauty. St. Paul reached this Reality through his vision of vicarious suffering, St. John through his thought of the incarnation. One man is practical and builds his faith on the Sermon on the Mount; another is speculative, and comes to Christ through far-reaching ideas; while still another is mystical, and enters into the mystery by meditation and prayer. Yet it is ever the same Reality, and it is fellowship

with Him as He actually is that saves us, healing our wounds, cleansing our stains, and comforting our hearts.

As there have been many visions of the Reality we call Christ in the past, each age interpreting it in the light of its best and highest life, so there will be many others in days to come. It matters not that in our age the skies have been pushed back and the awful depths of the universe revealed—the Divine Reality abides—no. doubt incalculable changes of thought await us, with many reconstructions of civilisation, but, as Goethe said, we can never get beyond the Spirit of Jesus. Deeper truth it is not given us to see in the dim country of this world; higher Reality we do not need to know. If the social passion of our age gives us another Christ, it will be only one more aspect of the Eternal Christ who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

The same Yesterday—that is, through all the dark, mysterious past, the “old dark backward and abysm of time,” out of which the race has climbed. That is the key to the philosophy of evolution. The same To-day—despite the wide weltering chaos of a world-shaking war, with its blood and fire and tears. That is our only hope in these times that try the faith, aye, and the very souls of men—that slowly, tragically, yet surely the Spirit of Jesus will soften the hearts of men and heal the old hurt and heart-ache of humanity. The same Forever—

in all the unfathomed deeps and destinies that lie before us, through unknown revolutions and over-turnings, until whatever is to be the end of things. There is nothing in history, dark as much of it is, against the assurance that the Spirit of Jesus will yet triumph over all ignorance, injustice, and uncleanness.

"When the last day is ended,  
And the nights are through;  
When the sun lies buried  
In its grave of blue;  
When the stars are snuffed like candles,  
And the seas no longer fret;  
When the winds unlearn their cunning,  
And the storms forget;  
When the last lip is palsied,  
And the last prayer said;  
Love will reign immortal,  
While the worlds lie dead."



## **THE FAITH**



Almighty Father, we lift up our hearts to Thee in love and gratitude for this day dedicated to the Eternal Life, hallowed by that Name that is above every name, and laden with the memories of generations of just men who trusted in Thee. White with the religion of ages, eloquent with the holiest associations of humanity, may the rosary of its hours renew within us the sweet spirit of prayer, lifting us into its high communion of the life of faith. Make us responsive to that silent and blessed influence—enfoldng us, always and everywhere, like the soft air that enwraps us, touching our minds to wistful love and longing, and bowing our hearts in the ineffable wonder of worship.

Thou art the Father of our spirits, and if we seek Thee, it is because Thou hast first sought us, teaching our hands to build this place of beauty and quietness where our hearts may be at home and where our loneliness is lost in a larger fellowship. Make it a house of vision and an altar of light, that he who speaks and those who hear may be drawn together in the unity of the spirit, the joy of insight, and the sacrament of service. May those who enter it leave here their burden and take a song away, learning the faith that casts out fear, the hope that defies despair, and the love that knoweth the deep things of God. Let none go as he came, but with a new stillness in his heart, and a nameless joy.

O Searcher of hearts, from Thee nothing is hidden, nothing unknown; Thou knowest us as we cannot know ourselves, and seest "the sin which the shadow of our sinfulness hides from us." Cleanse us, O Purity of God, in the quiet of this hour; take away all evil, all unkindness, all that is alien to Thy will, that was clean hands and pure minds we may take up the tasks of the morrow with unburdened hearts. Heal our sorrows, lift up our weakness, lead us in the Road of the Loving Heart, and to each one grant that unutterable blessing which all are seeking but cannot express, even Thyself revealed in our hearts.

Merciful Father, as Thy goodness surpasseth all our thought so let Thy hearing transcend our asking, that day by day we may grow in grace of mind, in firmness of faith, in purity of character, in sweetness of charity. Teach us a more vivid and healing sympathy one for another, a finer art of insight for those who are baffled or dismayed by the vicissitudes of life, and a nobler skill in doing good to all. Let us not pass hence until we have attained to some likeness to Him whose beauty haunts us, whose spirit troubles us with its sweet torment, and whose truth is our light and our hope. In His name. Amen.

## XIV.

### THE FAITH

"I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith."

—II Timothy 4: 7.

**S**T. PAUL was old and almost blind when he wrote these words. He was in prison in Rome awaiting trial for his faith, and had to sleep every night in a dingy dungeon chained to a Roman soldier. It was winter, and his frail body felt the chill of it, albeit his intrepid spirit was still unconquered. He was writing to his beloved son in the Gospel, asking him to bring his heavy cloak for comfort, his books for cheer, and his parchments that he might write. At his first trial before Nero, all his friends forsook him, leaving him alone. Only Luke was with him when he wrote. He knew that the end was near. He was ready for it, eager for it, having fought the good fight and kept the faith.

What was the faith? What did those words mean to St. Paul? What should they mean to us? How can we keep the faith? What is involved in the keeping of it? Such are the questions that challenge our hearts as we think of the close of that great life, with its serene confidence and its unwavering loyalty. St. Paul had suffered the loss of everything that men strive for, fight for,

cling to, counting them as refuse that he might keep one thing. What was it? What did he hold to be the most worth keeping in a world where life is a count of losses every year? What was the mark of the prize of the high calling, pursuit of which gave unity and sacramental beauty to his life? In labours always, in perils oft, he fought to keep one thing inviolate at any cost. What did St. Paul mean by the faith?

Certainly he meant something more than a system of theology. No such system had then been formulated, nor did it take shape until much later—and the profound, genetic, creative mind of St. Paul furnished most of its materials. He was a mighty thinker for whom the Gospel was the last and highest truth of which man has either possession or hope, and his eager, pioneering intellect went in quest of long reaches of truth, bringing back rich treasure. His vision of the love of God in Christ unveiled a whole world of new ideas, which he strained his strength to grasp and realise. Yet his faith was not primarily a philosophy, but a fellowship. It was not loyalty to an order of ideas, but friendship with a Person. "For me to live is Christ," he said, telling the secret and centre of his heroic and dedicated life; that is, for me to live is for Christ to live again, suffer again, and rise again in triumph. Such was the heart of his faith, the whole of it, and all his thinking was the effort of a vivid and vigorous intellect to interpret,

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expound, and apply the revealing experience of the life of Christ in his heart.

For St. Paul the Living Christ was too great a reality to be fathomed, much less formulated, by the human intellect. Yet he toiled to interpret it none the less, knowing the while that no one may ever hope to give it adequate expression. He was not the man to belittle theology, as the fashion has been of late years. Nor should we. The great minds who have toiled to build a House of Doctrine deserve the homage of mankind. They thought deeply of divine things. They sought to form the minds of men in worthy ideas, to cast over our fleeting life the dignity and power of a consistent thought of the universe. They dreaded the chaos that comes of living by the light of our vagrant insights, as they feared the superstition into which religion sinks without the criticism and discipline of the intellect. No doubt their forms of thought are now archaic, as ours will be in times to come, but they were noble servants of the race. They erred, manifestly, in trying to fashion a final form of faith. The final faith, if it appears while history is still rolling on, must be compatible with vast and unpredictable changes of thought. It must be able to live in new times as they unfold, with new developments of life. As such it cannot be a system of dogma, but a life, a great perception, a consensus of insight, aspiration, and experience.

Theology, as Kant said of Philosophy, does not

discover truth; it defends it. Here the great thinkers of the past did heroic service, albeit often in a bitter and unhappy spirit. If the faith for which St. Paul fought was not a system of dogma, can we say that it was loyalty to an institution? It included that doubtless, but much more. No great church existed when he wrote, but only a few unstable groups scattered along his pilgrim way. Their life was precarious, and no one knew what they were going to be. No, he meant a mystical union with Christ, a self-identification with Him in a fellowship of life and death. This unreserved, self-forgetting surrender of himself to the Living Christ, in which the revelation of the love of God, as well as the ideal for man, was a personal relation—that was the faith of St. Paul. When he spoke of the Faith he meant the covenant of his soul with Christ, the vow he had made to the Eternal God, the pledge of fealty to the heavenly vision, and this he had kept inviolate.

What does the faith mean to us? Since it were a shame in us to mean less by the Faith than St. Paul meant by it, it is more pertinent to ask, how does faith become the faith? Here is the crux of the whole matter in respect of faith, and also the secret of keeping it. Even the noblest truth, if held only as a theory, may be nothing more than a piece of mental furniture. The Fatherhood of God may be only a platitude. Until a truth takes hold of the affections and the will it does not

become real, personal, luminous, and fruitful. Long ago Carlyle said that the real religion of a man is not what he believes intellectually, nor what he defends in argument, but what he practically believes, lays to heart, and acts upon. That is his religion; that is the chief fact concerning him in every case. Some men pride themselves on being orthodox. Others are vain of their liberalism. Neither is anything so long as it is a mere theory or dogma. Allison Parr, in "The Inside of the Cup," expresses the fact of the matter, as well as the deep need of life, when she says: "I cannot take a consensus of opinion about God—he *must be my God!*" Exactly; it is when the Father of humanity becomes "my Father" that the sweet heavens are built into unity and power, and life has meanings deeper than words, deeper than tears.

How can such a thing be? In the Journal of Wesley we read how, in his early years, he was brought sharply up to this question: Can you preach to others who have not faith yourself? Sorely distressed, he asked Peter Bohler whether he should leave off preaching or not. Bohler answered: "By no means." Whereupon Wesley asked: "But what can I preach?" Bohler replied in memorable words: "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith." At first that looks like an exhortation to hypocrisy, a process of make-believe. But not so.

Wesley had no intellectual difficulty regarding the Gospel he was preaching. None at all, apparently. But it had not taken hold of his heart. It was a traditional faith handed down from the past. Very wisely he acted on the advice of Bohler, and at last there came that "strange warming of the heart" which meant so much to England and to the world, and faith became the Faith—even the faith that brought light out of darkness, power out of weakness, and heroic courage out of a life haunted by fear.

Always it is so. Whether this enveiling come suddenly as a storm, or slowly as the dawn, it is the one great human achievement, and it takes many forms. Intellectual difficulties may remain, as they must remain while men think as mortals; but, as Newman said, a thousand intellectual perplexities need not make one spiritual doubt. When we take the truth to heart it ceases to be abstract, and becomes intimate, personal, liberating; life loses its loneliness, and there grows up in the heart the sense of a fellowship closer than any human friendship, more tender, more revealing, more satisfying. Then we learn for ourselves the truth of that Credo written by a wise poet, as a preface to a dainty little book \* of verse worth its weight in gold:—

Not what, but whom, I do believe,  
That, in my darkest hour of need,

\*"Bees in Amber." By John Oxenham.

Hath comfort that no mortal creed  
To mortal man may give—  
Not what, but whom!  
For Christ is more than all the creeds,  
And His full life of gentle deeds  
Shall all the creeds survive.  
Not what I do believe, but whom!  
Who walks beside me in my gloom?  
Who shares the burden wearisome?  
Who all the dim way doth illumine,  
And bids me look beyond the tomb  
The larger life to live?  
Not what I do believe, but whom!

How true those words are to the life of St. Paul, and of all the saints, famous or obscure, who have won the faith and kept it! The grand thing in Augustine, as in Luther, was not his theology, much of which he retracted, but his fellowship with God—his dialogue with the Eternal, his endless colloquy of prayer and praise. How can we win the Faith? During his summer in Europe in 1872, his biographer tells us, Phillips Brooks brooded much over this subject, and his meditations bore fruit in a remarkable sermon. For so it is that great sermons come to be. They are not made; they grow. Haunted by the text, "I have kept the faith," he jotted down his thoughts as they ripened. He noted, first, that no faith can be kept unless it is obeyed—and he might have added that what is true of keeping our faith is equally true in winning it. Truth acted upon attests itself, not simply to the intellect as a thesis, but to the heart as a living reality. As St. Francis was wont



to say, and Savonarola after him, "We know as much as we do," which led Brooks to note that there is a strange moral element in all the passages of the New Testament where "the faith" is mentioned. He noted, further, that no faith can be truly kept except by discovering in it relations to life; but he did not note that it is the seeming denial of faith by the facts of life that shakes the souls of men!

Life is one long trial of faith. It begins early, it never stops, and it goes on to the end. There is disaster, often "following fast and following faster," like Nemesis pursuing its victim. Lazarus was good and just—thrifty, let us say, in the days of his health; but misfortune came. His health failed. His money melted away. Crushed and helpless, he lies at the gate of the rich man, with only the dogs to compose his spirit in ruin! Can Lazarus keep the faith? Such an incident is but one page from a vast chapter of the book of human life. Disease seizes a child, works its hideous will, and we lay its thin and wasted form in the grave. Can faith face such a fact and make bereavement a step upward? Suddenly, like a bolt from a clear sky, a man is struck down in his prime, laid upon a bed of pain, his work halted, if not ended, and he shunted like a wrecked car off into obscurity. Can he keep the faith? What though he kept his compact with God in the full tide of his power, can he still keep it in isolation? These are the things

that try the faith of men, making the high truth of the Gospel hard to win and harder still to hold.

There is moral defeat in ourselves or in those we love, so pitiful, so heartbreaking. Who would not rather see his son dead than to have him lose faith in virtue, in honour, in righteousness, and become a moral degenerate? Injustice, inhumanity, brutality—how they darken the heavens in this world of war! Only the other day a man from Armenia told of the fate that had befallen his family, his friends, his nation—so ruthlessly slaughtered—and asked how any one could have faith in God in face of such facts. Finally, “if we wait the grave in our house,” said the sad-hearted Preacher of old; and we are every day reminded of the fact. Men are born; they struggle, they fit themselves for usefulness, they put forth all their power for good, and the ascending effort is met and ended by death. Nor wealth, nor intellect, nor service, though it be the longest and the most availing, can save us from that vast, all-devouring grave of humanity into which we must sink in the end. What shall we say to all this? Or shall we keep silent, as if smitten mute, and let disaster, disease, defeat, and death have the last word? Is there any word of light and hope amid the shadows?

Assuredly! These things do but challenge the human soul to put forth its power; these are the facts that in all ages have evoked the great truths of faith. It is the tragedy of life that begets the

faith of brave souls and keeps it alive. The final dialectic in proof of faith is not in argument, but in the tears and blood and triumph of righteous souls who win amidst many tribulations. Keeping the faith has too often meant assent to a system of concepts, holding a set of propositions; a feat for which any blockhead or blackguard might qualify himself. Keeping the faith in the great and true sense means loyalty to the high vows of the soul, loyalty to the moral being of God, loyalty to the highest in humanity, loyalty to the heavenly vision. Above all, it means that the realities of religion must be resolved into character and the ideal forces that make character. Nothing else or less can stand the testings of life and time and death. So and only so will the truths that make us men be authenticated and made equal in the emergencies of chance and change and sorrow.

Keep the Faith whatever foes assail; keep it whatever else be lost in the confusions of life. Keep it as lover, husband, wife in the home; keep it as friend, as citizen. Keep the solemn awful covenant of the soul with God at any cost! Fidelity here is momentous. Let me call upon you, and upon myself, to regard nothing as valuable that involves the violation of these vows of the soul in the presence of the ideal. What does it profit if a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Our vows are the heart of our religion. They are the true sacraments of faith, and

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it behooves us to renew them this day, rededicating our utmost to the highest! Thus St. Paul fought the good fight, enduring hardship as a good soldier; and thus he won the victory most worth winning. Not happiness, not ease, not glory, but "a crown of righteousness" was his reward—righteousness, the one great word of the Bible, the one sure hope of humanity, the one ultimate grace of life!

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."



**WHY DO THE BIRDS SING?**

Eternal God, our heavenly Father, how gracious is Thy power, how divinely deep is Thy wisdom, how vast the empire of Thy beauty enwrapping our little lives in its grace and mystery. Once more, by the weavings of light and shadow, and soft hymns of night and day, Thou hast brought us out of ice and snow into the wonder of spring, with its witchery of swelling buds, its returning notes of bird-song, and its prophecy of seedtime and harvest. O Lord, we worship Thee with hearts made wistful by the touch of infinity, and minds made tender with a sweet sadness in joy, melted to prayer by Thy mercy, exalted to praise by Thy power, rejoicing in the constancy of a love that never forgets, never fails, never tires.

Visit us with Thy salvation; open our minds to joy; quicken us by Thy spirit that quickeneth the life round about us, stirring sleeping seeds in their beds and waking the songs of birds in the woodland. Thou ever-abiding Presence, make clean the hearts of us, purify our thoughts, renew the sense of Thy nearness, and may our faith be a river bright and strong, refreshing all our days. Release us from the slavery of care, from the misery of mean anxiety, from the unrest of poor ambition, from the sorrow that comes of grasping for ourselves. What is dark within us, illumine; what is low, exalt; and grant us the liberty of Thy truth, the joy of being clean, and the gladness of obeying the angel of Thy will.

Lord, we thank Thee for the wise and holy truth Thou hast made known to us, sometimes in joy, sometimes in tears; and also for that which lies always beyond our grasp, and the beauty that allures while it eludes. Deepen within us the old divine discontent; make more vivid those ideals that torment us with their loveliness, that day by day we may be led from the low valley of fear towards the heights of vision and power. Let not the vision fade or grow dim; trouble us with the hauntings of an eternal tomorrow; perplex us, that we may redouble our efforts for a larger, fuller, richer life of the spirit.

Teach us, Lord, how to live gladly in Thy beautiful world, and yet look beyond it to the reality of things eternal; how to keep our hearts responsive to the Unseen while yet no duty is left undone, no obligation neglected; how to bring the light of the highest truth to the service of the humblest task. O show us how to live reverently, how to love faithfully, how to pray fervently; that our lives may be linked with Thine and with our fellow souls in a communion of grateful worship and happy devotion. Guide us in the way that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, following Him in whose name we pray. Amen.

## XV

### WHY DO THE BIRDS SING?

"The time of the singing of birds is come."—  
*Canticles 2: 12.*

**O**LD as it is, there is always something new, something prophetic, in the miracle of the coming of spring. No man of us, unless he be utterly dead of soul, but feels a new thrill and throb of heart as he witnesses the wonder of the world renewed. "Behold, I make all things new" is a text of which Nature writes a new exegesis every year, lest we forget. Gently the earth, but yesterday so grey and winter-worn, is bathed in sunlight; silently a new life wells up from within, and the wonder is wrought. The dead grasses are gone; they are reborn in living green. Since time began this lesson has touched the heart of man with a new hope that, if God so reclothes the grass which perishes, shall He not much more by a mightier ministry renew our souls? And so, evermore, again and again,

The question of Nicodemus  
Receives an annual reply.

With the first hint of spring the birds return to witness the marvel, and to celebrate in song the oldest of all sacraments. Voices clothed in feathers, they are heralds of a new advent; and spring would surely hesitate to come without their



welcome. How bleak and bare, how forlorn and cheerless the world would be without these winged mystics of the woodland, in whose soft throats the joy of life is set to so many keys of prayer and praise and prophecy. Where birds do not sing, man has no heart to live. One of the saddest stories in classic lore tells of a lake called Avernus—meaning birdless. Located in the crater of an extinct volcano, a poisonous air issuing from the infernal depths hung over its water and stupefied any bird that tried to fly across it. Suddenly the wing lost its power, and the eagle in its pride and the sweet song-bird in its joy fell as if shot in mid-air. No wonder it was a symbol of desolation and a warning to youth against the poisonous pleasures and deadly follies that kill the white Bird in the Bosom.

Long ago, near the window of my boyhood home in the South, a dainty bird was wont to give a concert every morning in honour of the dawn. It was a mocking bird, the queen of woodland song, and "in that dim hour 'twixt dreams and dawn, lone in the hush of sleeping things," she poured out her heart in her morning hymn. Swaying to and fro on a twig, she sang till for very joy she could bear it no longer, and then she would bound into the air in an ecstasy of glee. Alighting upon the twig once more, she took up the next stanza, which ended, as before, in an outburst of joy which swept her away. What sweet madness of joy! What prodigal outpouring of variegated melody! Since those far-off days that come not back the

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question of this hour has often been in my heart, and it returns with each returning spring. Why do birds sing? Why, and by what right, are they so happy in a world so full of woe? What secret do they know that we have not learned of the hidden truth of God?

There are days when the song of a bird seems like the echo of some nameless, ineffable gladness in our hearts. Then we learn what Meredith meant when he said that he was part of the music he heard on the boughs, and that for sheer joy his heart leaped into the breast of the bird. Such days give a foretaste of what heaven must be. But there are other days when the notes of a bird-song pierce us like arrows, as any one can testify who has heard them when his heart is near to breaking under the weary weight of some crushing sorrow. Indeed, the contrast between the joy of the birds and the tragedy of man is often staggering, and makes the heart sink. An English officer tells how amid one of the great battles of Flanders, when the sky was torn by shrieking shells, he heard a little bird singing with all its might in a tree-top, as if trying to drown the din of war with its song. Such a scene reveals how deep this subject goes into the mystery of life, raising questions that shake the soul and dismay it. Burns felt it long ago when he wrote:

"Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon,  
How can ye bloom so fair?  
Ye little birds, how can ye sing,  
And I so full of care?"

Thou'lt break my heart, thou little bird,  
That sings upon the thorn:  
Thou minds me of departed days  
That never shall return."

Fitzgerald quotes these lines from Burns, of which there are several versions, in one of his letters, and adds two stories by way of exposition: "Number one. Some thirty years ago Tennyson went over the Burns country. When he was one day by Doon-side, 'I can't tell how it was, Fitz, but I fell into a passion of tears.' And Tennyson was not given to melting moods at all. Number two. My old friend Childs told me that he one day started outside the coach in company with a poor woman who had just lost a husband or child. She talked of her loss with some resignation, till the coach happened to pull up by a roadside inn. A 'little bird' was singing somewhere; the poor woman then broke into tears, and said, 'I could bear anything but *that*.' I dare say she had never heard Burns; but he heard the little bird that he knew would go to all hearts in sorrow."

What made that officer pause on a red field of war when he heard a little bird singing? What opened the fountain of tears in the heart of that poor, brave woman at the roadside inn? There is hardly need that any one state it in words. Every man knows what it is, every one of us has felt it. We can bear anything, perhaps everything, if we know that there is love and pity at the heart of this dark world. If God really cares, all is well and will be well in the end. But when the one

voice that comes to us from the universe is a voice of careless, joyous song, then a desolating sense of forsakenness falls over us, overwhelming the stoutest heart. If nature is lightsome and griefless through all the bitterness of our woe it seems as if God had left us, and as if we were in a universe that takes no heed of our sorrow. Yet the birds sing, as they may have sung on that spring morning when Jesus was nailed to the Cross. They sing beside the open grave in which we lay the loves of life and the fellowship of years, as if to mock us with their mirth. Why do birds sing?

Is God indifferent? When we turn to science in our sorrow, it gives us no comfort, but only a stony gospel of relentless, passionless law. John Burroughs, in his essay on "The Gospel of Nature," tells us that Nature is cruel, blind, wasteful, indifferent; yet nothing is lost. What she lavishes with one hand, she gathers with the other. If she happens to hit the mark it is because she shoots in all directions, and cannot miss it. Love, holiness, mercy, forgiveness, pity, she has none. Flood, fire, wind, gravity, are for us or against us indifferently. The race is for the swift, the battle for the strong. The weak, the slow, the unlucky, are crushed and forgotten, and that is the end of it. Myriads fail that a few may succeed a very little. As we may read:

"Nature does not preach; she enforces, she executes. All her answers are yea, yea, or nay, nay.

Of the virtues and beatitudes of which the Gospel of Christ makes much, she knows nothing. Put yourself in her way, and she crushes you. Nature is not benevolent; Nature is just, gives measure for measure, makes no exceptions, never tempers her decrees with mercy, or winks at any infringement of her laws. And in the end is not this best? Could the universe be run as a charity institution, or as a poorhouse? Without this merciless justice, where should we have brought up long ago? It is a hard gospel; but rocks are hard, too; yet they form the foundation of the hills."

No doubt it is all true as far as it goes, but it is not all of the truth. Why think of a man as being apart from Nature, as if he were an alien in the world, an exotic planted here by chance in a climate too austere? Is not John Burroughs as much a part of Nature as the stones, the birds, the hills? Why talk as if wisdom, pity, joy, goodness were qualities projected by the imagination of man into a lifeless and indifferent universe? Since man is the child of Nature, as science has been so busy telling us, what is in man must be in Nature, and it is her qualities that live and grow and come to flower in his life. Such qualities as mercy and pity must exist outside of man, else they would not exist in man, and he may grow in these graces if only he will be quiet and attend. Nature does not preach, but Jesus did, and His words are more truly the voice of the universe than the song of a bird. Perhaps this was why St. Francis was

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wont to preach to the birds, that he might tell them the real reason for their song.

There will always be those who conceive of man as a martyr in the arena of brute forces, fighting for his faith against blind fate. Such a view of life is natural to a dramatic temperament which groups all other facts round the strange and moving fact of death, and sees all things in the light of that crisis. Albeit, that is not the view of the martyr himself, who is fearless in death, as in life, but rather the view of his shuddering friends in the grandstand. It is only a balcony view of life. The supreme fact about our world as we ought to learn anew every spring, is not death, but life—life prodigal, abundant, overflowing, multitudinous! Of death as we use the word, and the meaning we attach to it, Nature knows nothing. Death is only a dark room in which Life changes its robe, and marches on. Soon we shall search in vain for the waste of last year; it is not merely covered over, it is being liyed up. So much we might learn, if we had eyes to see, from the little, brave, unconsidered things now taking up their tasks anew, weaving before our very eyes the glory of a present God upon the hills.

Of those who have lived in our day, Wordsworth has more to teach us here than any one else who has set his vision to music. He saw the dark facts which made the faith of Tennyson falter; his sympathy was profound, and his pathos was an unmitigated, hard pathos, too deep for words—but his insight was deeper still, reaching to the Reality of

which the sorrows of life are but shadows. Where Tennyson groped he walked with firm step and unshaken faith, seeing beyond the tragedy of life a great law of Happiness to which tragedy itself bears witness. For, without happiness as its background, tragedy is inconceivable! Only in a world of filial loyalty and wedded happiness could the tragedies of King Lear and Othello become possible. Since tragedy is a clash with an established order, the deepest reality of the world, the background of the sin and pain and sorrow of life must be an Eternal Order of Joy, else there could be no such thing as tragedy. He saw what the tragic poets see, and left it not wholly unrecorded, but he saw that the master fact is not sorrow, but "joy in widest commonality spread."

If now we follow the Poet of the Lakes, he will lead us to Another who preached beside Lake Galilee in the olden time, and whose words, new as the fresh wonder of spring, tell us why the birds sing. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." What words they are! How simple, how sweet, yet how profound in their all-transfiguring vision of the infinitely minute providence of God! No wonder George Macdonald loved those words. He took the Teacher at His word, and lived in the light of the Love that moves the sun and all the stars, and watches each little bird that falls in the forest with pitying eye:

It shall not cause me any alarm,  
 For neither so comes the bird to harm,  
 Seeing our Father, thou hast said,  
 Is by the sparrow's dying bed;  
 Therefore it is a blessed place,  
 And the sparrow in high grace.

One of the greatest poems of recent years is entitled "To a Bird at Dawn," by Richard Le Gallienne, a song so lovely that it makes one want to cry for joy, so near is joy to pain. Listening to "a little creature of soft wings," the poet hears in its songs an echo of the old, unfathomable rhythm of the world, since "from no small feathered throat wells that august, eternal note." In that voice that softly talks with God he heard a simple word a child may spell, yet deeper than life or death or hell; a speech that speaks not, save as speaks the moon in heaven, yet hath power to tell the soul the thing it seeks:—

So in your liquid note impearled  
 Sings the long epic of the world.

—Thrilled, subdued, exalted, the listening poet learns by insight the deep truth which the little bird knows by instinct—that life is good, that love is lord, that a profound joy enspheres all the sorrow and woe of the world, and will yet triumph over it:

O, you make so deep a thing  
 Of joy, I dare not think of pain  
 Until I hear you sing again.

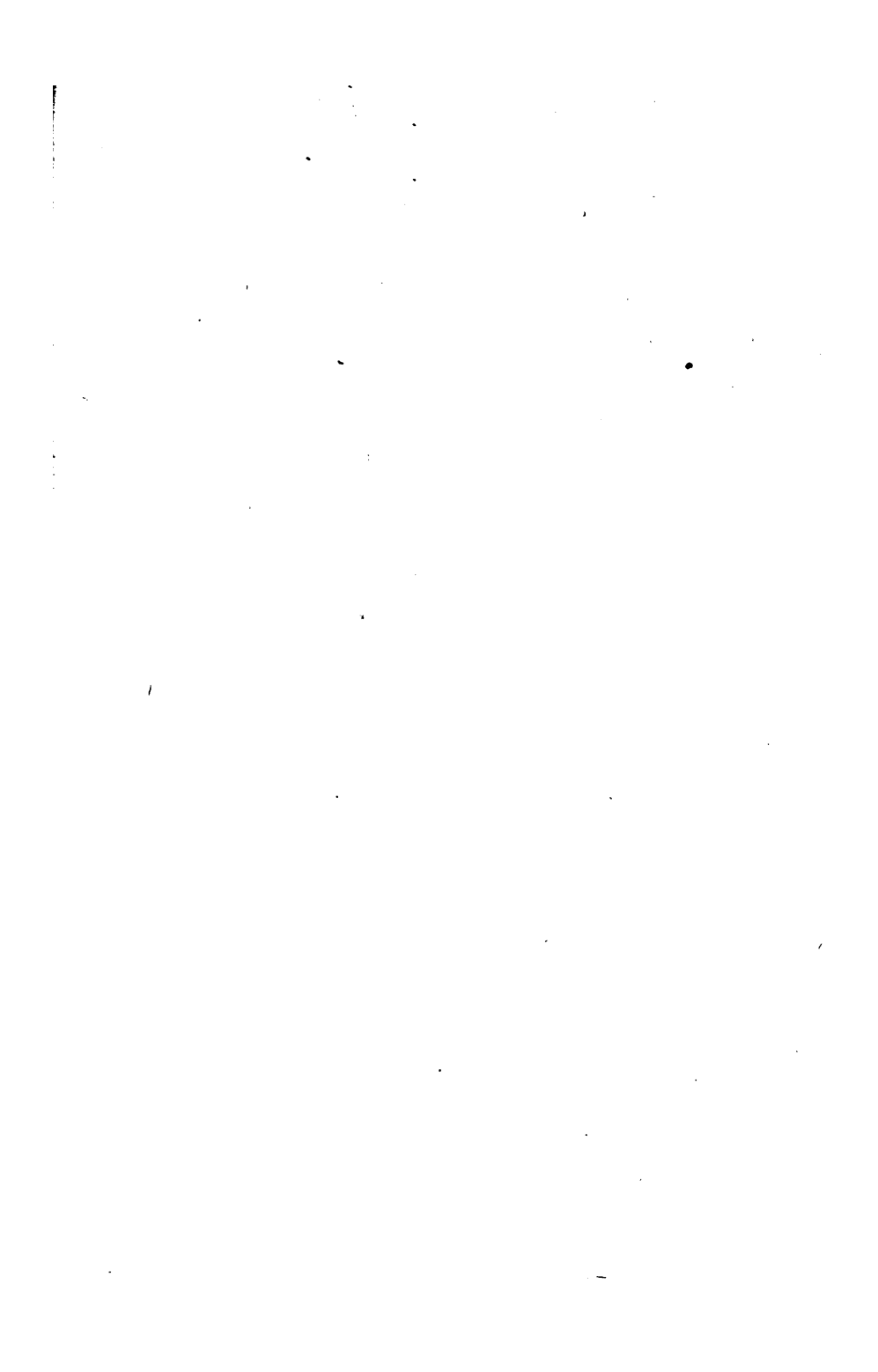
Taught by tradition, we speak of Jesus as a Man of Sorrows, but He talked only of His joy. His legacy was not a sob, but a song, and those who

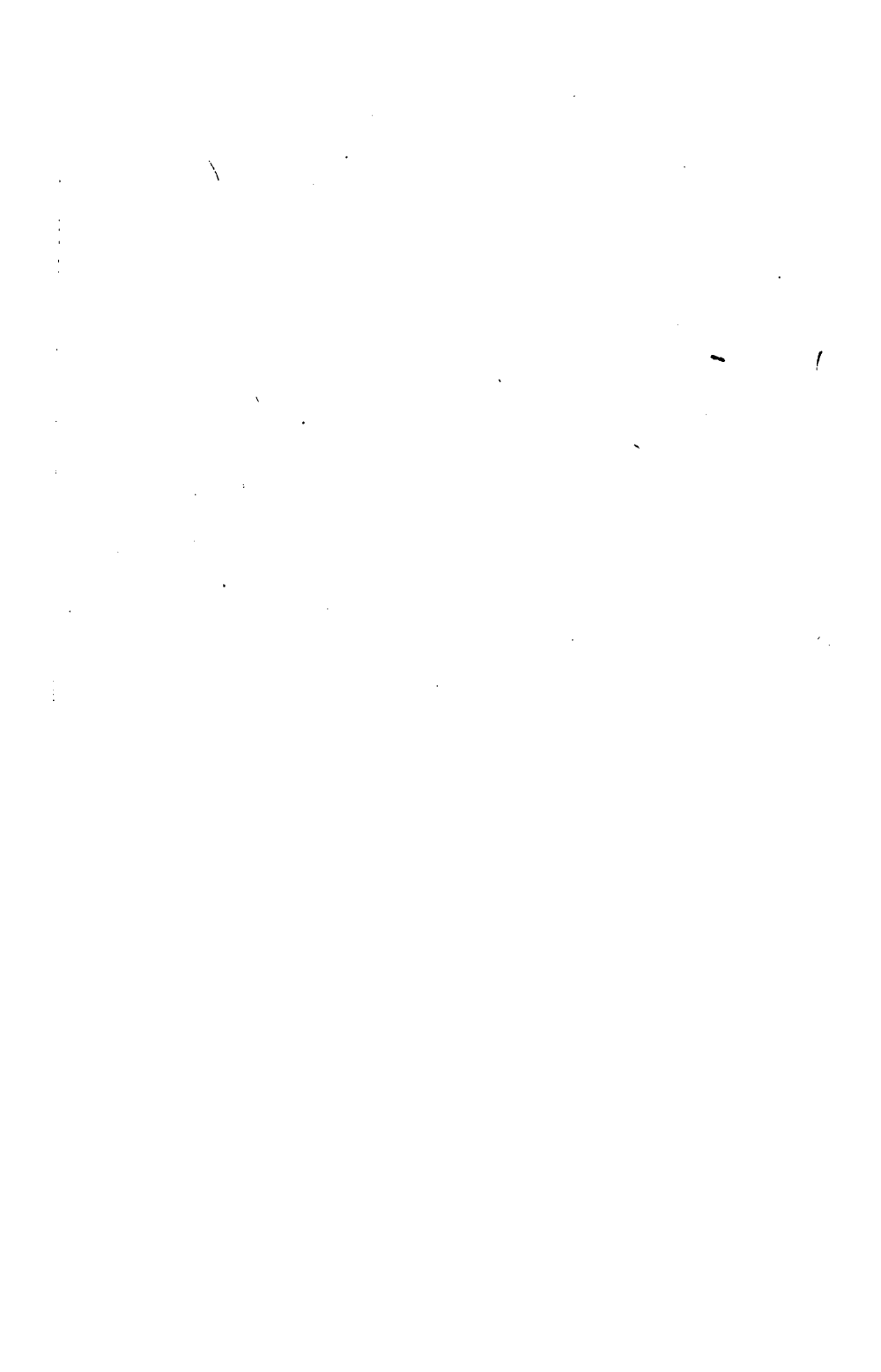


have followed Him closest have gone singing through the world. Francis of Assisi and his friends led the hardest and barest of lives. Of physical comforts they had none. Yet Francis always spoke of his band as "the Lord's merry men." A thousand facts show that it is not hardship in itself that drives away joy, nor the absence of it that produces it. Pleasure is superficial. Joy is profound. Often it is that in our utterest extremities the rarest feelings leap to birth; "a joy springs up amid distress, a fountain in the wilderness." There are tragedies in bird-land, as in man-land, but the birds sing on. Therein they are wise. At the heart of the universe there is joy evermore—the joy of creation, the joy of struggle, the joy of triumph, the joy of love, in which God renews His ancient rapture. At the end, as at the beginning, the morning stars will sing together a song of praise unto Him whose joy knoweth no end.

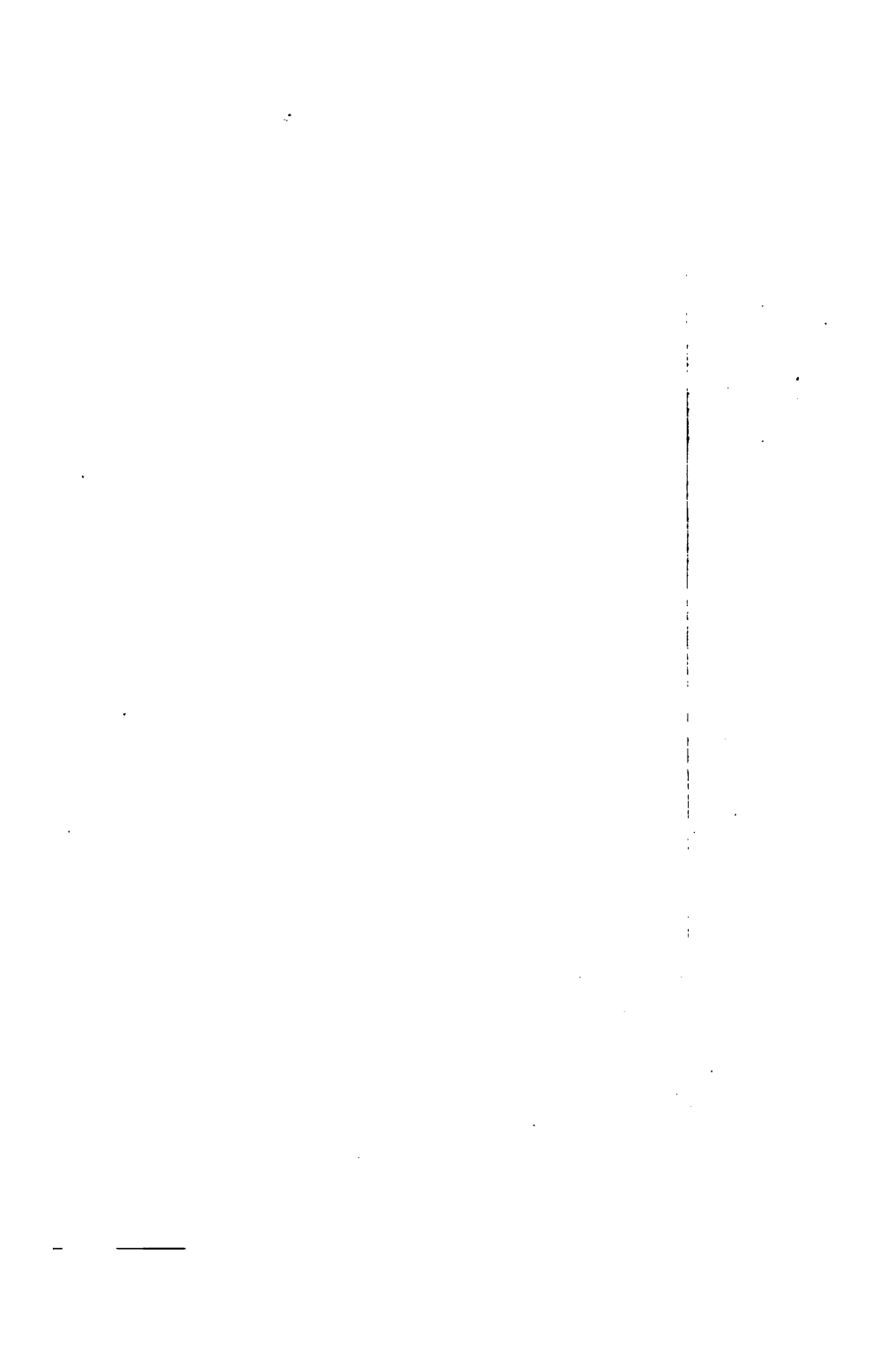
Why do birds sing? Because they cannot help it; because the very stones would burst into song if they were silent. Because they are winged prophets of "the ultimate decency of things and the veiled kindness of the Father of men." Because joy is deeper than sorrow, as life is profounder than death, and he who learns this truth foreknows a day when there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying. It is therefore that birds sing.

And there is something the song saith  
That makes me unafraid of death.









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